

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

**A. D. 1843.**

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*AUGUSTA:*

WM. R. SMITH & Co., PRINTERS TO THE STATE.



1843.

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TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

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No. 15.]

[HOUSE.

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MEMORIAL

OF THE

KENNEBEC COUNTY

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

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



# MEMORIAL.

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*To the Hon. Senate and House of  
Representatives in Legislature assembled.*

THE undersigned would respectfully solicit your attention to the subject of giving a grant of lands to the several Agricultural Societies in the State, or to the several Counties for the support of the Agricultural Societies that are, or may be organized within them.

The benefits resulting from well conducted Agricultural Societies, under the patronage and protecting care of the several Governments wherein they are placed, have now been tested by nearly one hundred years experience,\* and have become so generally known and acknowledged, that we presume it will not be necessary to go into any argument, or bring forward any array of facts to prove it. We would however beg leave to bring forward a few general reasons why we deem it necessary for the Legislature to bestow a little more attention and aid to the several Agricultural Societies of this State.

The benefits being of a general or public nature, it seems unjust to tax individuals too much with the burthen of providing funds for the regular and active operations of such associations. It is certainly enough, if those who are called upon by their fellow citizens to take upon themselves the management of a Society, bestow their time and labor gratuitously for the promotion of a public good. This is a sacrifice which every one is always willing to take his turn in making, but beyond this it seems hard to make any requisition.

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\*The first Agricultural Society was established in Berne, Switzerland, in 1756. "It was composed of men of great weight in the republic—men well acquainted with the theory of agriculture, and well qualified to join the theory with practice."

Our State, thus far, has done as much in a pecuniary point of view, as the condition of her finances, and the state of public opinion would warrant. We would respectfully ask a continuance of this, for from our own observation and experience, we are fully satisfied that it is money well expended, and, like bread "cast upon the waters" returns to the public fountain from which it springs an abundant harvest in a great variety of forms. We are of the opinion however, that in addition to the present gratuity, it would be good policy for the Legislature to bestow grants of land to the several Counties, the income or sales of which shall be so vested as to make a permanent fund upon which they could at all times rely, and thus be enabled to extend more generally the benefits which always accrue from such institutions.

We base our opinions in this respect upon the following reasons. We believe it to be the duty of the Legislature to shift its policy in regard to the encouragement of our great and highly important agricultural interests, by extending as much liberality and support to the several Societies as has been bestowed upon institutions for the sister arts and sciences.

We take pleasure in being enabled to say, that our several colleges and academies have had more or less assistance from the State Government, and supplied, in a great measure, with permanent funds. These funds being, as they should be, exempted from taxation, certainly indirectly impose upon the property of the tax payers, a great majority of whom are farmers, a heavier burthen to bear in furnishing means to carry on the Government.

Aside from the general benefits which is derived from these institutions in common with all the rest of the community, farmers receive nothing as an equivalent, either real or imaginary. They are thus left alone, while the several learned professions have a strong source from which they who seek instruction in such matters can receive the requisite aid. In them the farmer finds no department appropriated to the express purpose of teaching or promoting his profession. This neglect is not found in the State Government alone. If we look to the National Government, the same neglect of the particular interests of the farmer meets you at once. This is not the case in regard to the other branches of industry.

Need we cite you to an enumeration of millions upon millions which Congress has appropriated and expended for the support and defence of the commercial interests?

Need we point out to you the constant aid which has been given, in the way of duties and prohibitions, enacted for the encouragement of the manufacturing interests, and from which the farmer receives only an indirect benefit?

Need we remind you of the thousands upon thousands which the General Government has already expended and is yet expending for the instruction of a favored few in the arts of war—amounting to not less than *six thousand dollars* for every individual Cadet who is thus educated? How much has been given to instruct a Farmer in the arts of peace?

Turn which way we may, with the exception of the annual trifle which the Statutes of this State at present bestow, and the wheat bounty formerly given,\* what do we find that comes directly to the farmer as an aid to sustain his endeavors to improve and elevate his calling? Yet they constitute at least three fifths of the community and are under the necessity of supporting in that ratio, directly or indirectly, the State and National Governments.

This they have always done cheerfully and without complaint. We now claim for them, as far as our State Government is concerned, a reciprocity of attention and aid, in order that the profession of Agriculture may be placed on the same footing with

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\*The policy of the wheat bounty has been censured, and perhaps it was not the best mode of stimulating agriculture; but if the statistics of the crops of that period be attended to it will be seen that more was saved to the citizens of Maine by the increased produce of bread stuffs than the amount of money paid out. In 1836, as near as can be ascertained by such returns as could be found, there were raised within the State 297,331 bushels of wheat—the deficiency required to be made up was brought from other States, and even from Germany. The bounty was offered, and the returns shew an amount of 1,015,114 bushels—allowing only *one fourth* part of this increase to be the result of the bounty, viz. 181,943 bushels, and this to be purchased of New York, where wheat was \$1,50 per bushel that year, and it will amount to \$190,972. The bounty that year was \$77,000, so that by appropriating so much as a stimulus, \$190,970 were prevented from going out of the State for bread. The increase of 1838 will show a similar result.

others, and that we may be enabled not only to reap enduring and substantial advantage from such aid, but be enabled, as well as others, to point with laudable pride to our means of improvement, and feel strong in their perpetuity.

The vexed question of the boundary which has so long held the most of our public lands in abeyance, being finally settled, we believe that now is the most favorable time for the Legislature to come forward to the relief of the farmer, and make a public and tangible demonstration in favor of the real interests of the State, by adopting a true policy in regard to this most numerous and most essential of the productive classes.

We hold it self evident that Government is bound to pursue the best course to maintain the present and to increase the future population of the State, and that this is the best done by holding out to enterprising farmers and mechanics, not only the means of improvement of their minds and occupations, but inducements to remain within the limits of our territory rather than seek a precarious home in the far west or in the sultry and sickly south. It is reasonable to suppose that lands thus put into the hands of farmers, the sales thereof being devoted to their benefit will, all other things being equal, be more readily settled and by the best kind of settlers, the sons of farmers and mechanics, who will go upon them and make a permanent home for themselves and families. Nor will the mere encouragement of agriculture and the mechanic arts, however important they are, be the only benefit that the government may derive from the bestowal of lands for this purpose. By the settlement and production or creation of new capital, an increase of taxable property will take place much more rapidly than will accrue by the common routine of tardy sales, and thus the revenue of the State receive a corresponding increase, while its strength and true greatness will be augmented by fastening as it were the most valuable kind of population upon the soil, and converting what is now the lair of the wild beast, into fertile farms and thriving villages.

We are accustomed to hear from the lips of political men, expressions in the highest degree complimentary to the farmer and mechanic. Once a year at least, we are cordially greeted with



the most complaisant smiles and the most endearing epithets. We are called the “*bone and muscle*” of the nation, our occupation styled the “*mother of wealth and the guardian of liberty*,” and our assistance earnestly solicited at the ballot boxes. And now, gentlemen, we in return call upon you—respectfully but urgently, with deference, but with a conscious right to be heard, for some definite and solid manifestation of your regard, commensurate with your own anxious appeals and repeated protestations of your sincere love and regard for us.

We are aware, that, as farmers, we have often asked in vain. We remember, more in grief than in anger, that we were last year spurned from your presence and our appeals and advocates treated with derision. But with a confident hope that a “sober second thought” will dictate a wiser and more politic course, we trust that we shall not now ask your aid in vain.

We remain, most respectfully, your friends and co-laborers in the cause of social improvement.

E. HOLMES,  
ELIJAH WOOD,  
J. H. UNDERWOOD, } Committee of Ken. County  
Agricultural Society.

January, 1843.

STATE OF MAINE.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
January 24, 1843. }

Laid on the table, and 300 copies ordered to be printed for the  
use of the House.

WM. T. JOHNSON, *Clerk.*