

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1844.

AUGUSTA:
WM. R. SMITH & Co., PRINTERS.

1844.

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 47.]

[HOUSE.

REPORTS AND BILL

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RETRENCHMENT.

[W. R. SMITH & Co...Printers.]

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
March 2, 1844. }

ORDERED, That 400 copies of the following Reports and Bill,
be printed, in one document, for the use of the Legislature.

W. T. JOHNSON, *Clerk.*

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
March 2, 1844. }

The joint select committee on Retrenchment, which have had under consideration so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the reduction of salaries, and also various petitions upon the same subject, have directed me to report, that legislation upon that subject is inexpedient, and that the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petitions; from which report I, as an individual member, dissent.

EBENEZER KNOWLTON, *Chairman.*



MINORITY REPORT.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
March 2, 1844. }

THE undersigned, a minority of the joint select committee to whom were referred so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the reduction of the salaries of public officers, and the petition of David Hunt and 956 other petitioners upon that subject, have had the same under consideration, and herewith ask leave to

REPORT:

That, in consequence of a heavy State debt remaining unpaid, the necessity it involves of a continued State tax, the difficulties that are experienced in relation to the payment thereof, the general scarcity of money, which, during the past few years, has prevailed among a majority of the tax paying public, and the voice of public sentiment, distinctly and audibly put forth upon this subject, in connection with many other reasons that might be adduced, we are compelled to differ from the views of a majority of your committee, and feel justified in recommending a reduction of the pay of certain public officers.

At the time the salaries of our public officers were established, and during a number of years subsequent thereto, all the means of providing for the support of individuals or families were at a much higher price than they are at present, or in all probability will again be, and with a smaller sum, much more of the comforts and necessities of life can be now procured, than could have been at the time before mentioned. Public officers therefore, can well afford to part with a portion of their salaries, and still maintain the dignity and defray the expenses of their offices, as well as they have done

heretofore with their present pay. The people are giving their attention to this subject, and ask for an equalization of the public burthens, and a just contribution towards defraying necessary expenses. In a particular manner, they look to the list of salaries, and conclude, after a patient and impartial examination, that they may, without injustice to official incumbents or violation of good faith, ask for, and expect a reduction.

Hereby a partial relief would be afforded to the tax paying public, *and still greater good would be accomplished, by showing to the people that their officers are willing to participate with them, in the pecuniary embarrassment of the times.* Economy in our public expenditures is recommended from every source—from the Executive of the State, the judicious and enlightened friends of the people, and from various sections known to all who are familiar with public affairs. A narrow and illiberal policy, is by no means to be desired, or necessary to be adopted; but when we are oppressed and burthened by debt, and surrounded by worthy citizens in embarrassed or impoverished circumstances, it becomes the duty of the lawgiver to lighten as much as possible, the pressure occasioned by onerous taxes; and a diminution in one branch of the public expenses, may open the way for a reduction in others. By observing a strict and rigid economy, and by bringing down all the expenses of government to the proper standard of a correct and judicious outlay—by reducing all such salaries as will bear a reduction, and abolishing all unnecessary offices—and by making the sessions of the Legislature, those of action and diligent business, much may be done for the relief of the public, to diffuse among the people, a spirit of hope and encouragement in relation to our State finances. It is believed that the services of able and competent men could be secured at lower salaries than are now paid, while the interests and dignity of the State, and the welfare of the people, would be fully and satisfactorily subserved.

States known to us as enjoying a high degree of prosperity, and largely engaged in various and important business affairs, have annexed to the list of their public officers, salaries much lower than those of this State. When it is taken into consideration, that un-

welcome and unavoidable circumstances have accumulated upon us a large public debt, and when we reflect that individuals in private life are compelled to curtail their expenses—to practice a system of self-denial, and observe a close economy, it appears to be an authorized and legitimate remark, that public officers should willingly submit to their portion of the sacrifices necessary to be made for the common good and prosperity of our State. An enlightened tone of public sentiment—a generous patriotism, and a disposition to observe good faith and unshaken fidelity, are sure guarantees that nothing will be wanting on the part of the people, to maintain the honor and interests of the State; and they have not only a full and clear right, but it is their imperious duty, to fix upon such compensation for their public servants, as the times and circumstances may dictate and authorize.

In presenting these views, the undersigned are influenced by no disrespectful or unfriendly feelings, towards any of our salaried officers, nor are we unmindful of the arduous and responsible duties devolving upon them, but being charged with an important duty, and required to report upon that part of the Governor's Message before alluded to, and entertaining as we do, the sentiments and views before expressed, we feel justified in dissenting from a majority of the committee, and offering the following Bill.

All which is respectfully submitted.

**EBENEZER KNOWLTON,
VARNUM CRAM,
SAMUEL W. FOX.**

STATE OF MAINE.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND
FORTY-FOUR.

AN ACT to reduce the salaries of certain public officers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled—as follows :

- 3 SECTION 1. Any persons who may hereafter be
4 elected or appointed to any of the offices hereinafter
5 mentioned, shall be entitled to receive salaries, in
6 quarterly payments on the first day of January, April,
7 July and October of each year, at the following annual
8 rates, instead of the sum now fixed by law, that is to
9 say :
- 10 Governor, twelve hundred dollars ;
 - 11 Secretary of State, eight hundred dollars ;
 - 12 Adjutant General, six hundred dollars ;
 - 13 Land Agent, eight hundred dollars ;
 - 14 Warden of the State's Prison, six hundred dollars ;
 - 15 Judges of the Supreme Judicial Court, each, fifteen
16 hundred dollars ;
 - 17 Judges of the District Courts, each ten hundred dol-
18 lars ;
 - 19 Attorney General, eight hundred dollars.

SEC. 2. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with
2 this act, are hereby repealed.