

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1845.

AUGUSTA:

WM. T. JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1845.

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 1.]

[HOUSE.

MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Maine, in Legislature assembled, on the first Wednesday of January, A. D. 1845.

The undersigned were selected as a committee to memorialize your body as the representatives of the people of Maine and the constituted guardians of the public weal, on a subject, believed to be more intimately connected with the improvement, the prosperity, the character, and the importance of our state, than any, which has yet engaged the public attention. In performing this duty, they pray you to be assured, that however explicitly and earnestly they may press upon you a favorable consideration of their own views, they never can lose sight, in expressing those views, of the respect and deference, they owe the representatives of the people.

The geographical position of Maine, in regard to the rest of the Union, is most unfavorable to her influence and importance as a member of it. The extreme portions of all great empires suffer in comparison with the more central portions, unless there be some special controlling circumstances to counteract this tendency in particular cases. The conviction has been forced, it is believed, upon the mind of every observing man, that our state is no exception to this common lot. Fortunately the people of Maine, under God, have the control of their own destinies in their own hands. They have only to *will* it, and Maine will become, not only one of the most rich, populous, productive and flourishing states of the

Union; but from special controlling circumstances, to which we shall refer, will become also, one of its most important and influential members.

The undersigned would not presume upon your indulgence by going largely into details, however interesting; but they would respectfully solicit you to cast your eye over the map of Maine, and to call to mind the rich natural resources of the state. Consider its rivers, its streams, its water-power, its harbors, its shipping and fishing interests, its forests, its mineral productions, its valleys for corn, and its "cattle on a thousand hills." We have moreover, an active, industrious, enterprising, and intelligent people, capable of availing themselves of these immense resources, if the necessary facilities were within their reach, and sufficient encouragement held out to them. Give the farmer a good market for his productions, and enable him to get them to that market at a trifling expense, and he asks for no bounties or favors. Where there are no other facilities for getting to market but the common roads, and the distance there is considerable, farmers of moderate and limited means must always remain so. They have no encouragement to attempt to do more, than live from year to year; for the expense of getting to market any surplus they could raise, would, perhaps, more than absorb the whole. But, give to the farmer the facilities offered by modern discoveries and improvements; and, though his farm be a hundred miles distant, he can realize, in many cases, within the merest trifle, the same price at his own door, that could be obtained by him at the market itself. His farm more than doubles in value; for the depressing effect of its remoteness from the market is counteracted through the instrumentality of the rail road. Nor do the advantages resulting to him, stop here. The same facilities which enable him to sell at advanced prices, also enable him to obtain his supplies at a cheaper rate. So sensible are the intelligent farmers of Massachusetts and Vermont of the immense value of rail roads to the agricultural interests of the interior, that in some towns, as it is said, they have taken nearly stock enough to build the rail road through their towns. In New Hampshire also, this same spirit is

awakened ; and the farmers there are giving evidence that they too understand their own interest.

But the beneficial influence of rail roads is not confined to the agricultural interest. The seaboard and towns on navigable waters have, by means of sea ports, the shipping interest, and steamboat navigation, a substitute for rail roads. Hence, on the seaboard, rail roads may be dispensed with in many cases without much inconvenience. But the steamboat of the interior is the rail road train. The rail road into the interior gives value to that which before was an incumbrance, or useless to its owner. It stimulates industry by insuring its reward. It renders accessible remote interior water privileges, and builds up villages, where otherwise there would be a desert. It brings to light and develops resources, that otherwise would for ever have lain hidden, or dormant. In no one branch of modern improvement, have the calculations of theory been so variant from the results of actual experience, as in that of rail roads. It was supposed, that the advantages would be confined almost exclusively to the commercial, the traveling, and the non-productive classes of the community ; and, that the farmers and mechanics, the laboring and producing classes would derive very little benefit from them. Experience, however, has proved, that the very reverse is the truth. It is the rail road, that places all on a level, that revives and stimulates industry, that furnishes facilities and encouragement to labor and production, and distributes and equalizes within the sphere of its influence, their advantages and profits.

As they have called your attention to the map of this state, the undersigned would also respectfully invite you to cast your eye on that of the contiguous British possessions—and, more especially, on the map of the Canadas in connection with the map of Maine. The favorable position of Montreal for a great commercial city, is too apparent to need illustration. That city has become the seat of government of Canada, and is the metropolis of the Provinces. She sits at the head of navigation from the sea, on the outlet of the lakes of the west, with which, and the rich extensive country by which they are surrounded, she has a ready and safe water com-

munication by means of a magnificent canal. The approach to Montreal from the sea by the river St. Lawrence, is somewhat difficult and dangerous even in the summer months: but for more than six months of the year, it becomes impossible, by reason of obstruction from the ice.—Hence it is apparent, that a more ready, and direct, and shorter channel of intercourse with the mother country, one free from obstruction at all seasons of the year, must be desirable; and that too, not only to Montreal, but to the whole province of Canada, and to the mother country itself, both in a commercial and a political point of view. It would even seem necessary to the protection of the special, as well as the commercial interests of Montreal and the Canadas. The enterprising and sagacious merchants of New York and Boston, are contriving and preparing to divert from Montreal and draw off to themselves as far as practicable, the natural trade of the lakes, by tapping the long line of intercommunication at Ogdensburg, at Buffalo, and at the head of lake Erie, by means of canals and rail roads already built or now building, or in contemplation; and to divide with her afterwards the balance of the trade, which may still flow to Montreal by having a direct intercourse with her. To defend herself against this draining and exhausting process, the most natural and the most effectual measure would seem to be a rail road connecting in the shortest, most eligible route, the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic. Looking at the map with a view to such an object, it is apparent at a glance, that the nearest point at which the Atlantic approaches Montreal, is Portland. If again the eye be cast eastward towards Cape Sable, it is apparent, that Portland is not only more than half the distance from Cape Sable to Montreal, but is in almost a direct line between the two places. According to one of the most carefully compiled maps extant, that of Mr. Tiarks, published by order of the British House of Commons in June, 1827,—the distance in a direct line from Cape Sable to Portland, is about two hundred, and the distance from Portland to Montreal, about one hundred and eighty-five geographical miles. It results then, by accurate mathematical calculation, that the distance from Montreal to Cape Sable, by way of Portland, exceeds by twenty miles

only the distance from Montreal to Cape Sable by a direct line. These facts would seem to demonstrate, that, provided the harbor of Portland is a suitable one, and the country between Portland and Montreal is favorable for the route of a rail road, that route has most striking and decided advantages over any, and all others.

As to the character of Portland harbor, its suitability as a seaport, its easiness of access, its freedom from obstruction by ice in the winter season, the undersigned beg leave to refer to the copy of a letter from a highly intelligent and respectable committee of the Portland Marine Society, a society constituted of experienced practical ship-masters, which accompanies this memorial.

Your memorialists would further represent, that the route from Montreal to Sherbrooke, the principal town in the Eastern Townships in Canada, distant about ninety-one miles from Montreal in the general direction of Portland, has been carefully examined, and found to be highly favorable for a rail road—that several routes have been named and partially explored, leading from Portland, so as to meet the route through Sherbrooke at the Canada line, all of which have been favorably spoken of—that one particular route has been reconnoitered by James Hall, Esq., and is pronounced by that skilful and practical engineer, to be uncommonly favorable. Your memorialists, however, regard the question of which route is the most favorable, and the most in accordance with the public interest, as an open question, to be determined hereafter, on careful explorations and surveys, and in view of all those considerations, which ought to govern in deciding it. But to remove all doubt, that at all events, there is at least one such favorable route, the undersigned beg leave to quote the following passage from Mr. Hall's report, a copy of which accompanies this memorial, and to which they respectfully refer. "Sufficient" says Mr. Hall, "has been accomplished by this reconnoissance, to satisfy me of the entire feasibility of constructing a rail road to the boundary, and thence to Montreal; and that with less difficulties than have been encountered on other roads in our country of equal extent. And I do not hesitate to say, according to my judgment and experience, that no rail road in this country has yet been constructed, of a length equal to

the distance from Montreal to Portland, where, taking one part of the route with another, the laying of the land is so favorable, the obstacles and difficulties to be surmounted are so few, and so easy to be overcome, and the facilities and means of construction so cheap and near at hand, as is the case in these respects, of the route of a rail road from Portland to Montreal. No engineer can pass over the distance without being struck with the favorable conformation of the face of the earth, and courses of the streams—with the passes among and through hills, and across mountain ranges, which nature has prepared beforehand, ready for the industry and enterprise of man to complete the work. Only two serious obstacles are to be found in the whole distance. These, on careful examination, will prove to be less serious than they appear and would be naturally supposed.”

In his supplemental report, Mr. Hall estimates the whole expense of the road, from Portland to the line of Canada, including the right of way, depots, work-shops, engines, and other appendages, at the sum of two and a half millions of dollars. To show to the legislature and to all who may take an interest in the subject, what degree of reliance may justly be placed on those estimates, we take the liberty to quote the following extract from a letter of D. A. Neal, Esq., President of the P. S. and P. Rail Road Co. to Geo. F. Patten, Esq., dated Dec. 22, 1843.

“I take the liberty to introduce to you, James Hall, Esq. of Portland, an Engineer well known in Maine, and in whose capacity and integrity I have the fullest confidence from an intimate acquaintance with him during his engagement on the P. S. and P. Rail Road, the original survey of which was made by him, and one division of it constructed under his immediate direction. Mr. Hall’s estimate of this division corresponds remarkably well with the actual results, and no better piece of road can be found in the country. This is a practical recommendation, which practical men will consider the best that can be given.”

It appears from Mr. Hall’s report, that with all the deviations from a straight line, in the general direction of the route of which he speaks, in order to keep on favorable ground, or to avoid obsta-

cles, or to meet the public convenience, the whole length of the route from the Atlantic at Portland, to the St. Lawrence at Montreal, is less than two hundred and fifty miles—less than a single day's journey by rail road. Your memorialists also learn from the most satisfactory sources, that the distance from Montreal to Boston by rail road through Portland, would be nearer by some twenty or thirty miles, than the distance from Montreal to Boston by any other practicable rail road route. But the route through Portland does not fall within the scope of the policy of Boston. Her purposes and views can only be subserved by a different route, a route through Fitchburg, through Concord, or in any other direction than that through Portland. The seaport and harbor of Portland afford attractions and facilities, that are inconsistent with her purposes and policy; for even Massachusetts might be in danger in due time, of losing her predominance in New England, from the rising fortunes and importance of Maine. Let a rail road be constructed, connecting the Atlantic and St. Lawrence at Portland and Montreal, and Maine becomes at once the grand thoroughfare of the Canadas. In this great enterprise, the interests of Maine on the one part, and of Canada on the other, are mutual, reciprocal, and in perfect harmony. In addition to these mutual and reciprocal advantages, each within its own limits would enjoy advantages peculiarly its own; and Maine especially would reap benefits, from it, that the most sanguine of her statesmen can scarcely estimate. Maine as a member of the Union, has received some lessons. It is hoped she has not received them in vain. She has learned at her cost, that she must look out for herself, and study her own interest;—and that if she does not take care of her own interest, her interest will not be cared for. Her natural resources are immense; but she needs capital judiciously applied, to make those resources available. Let her by a wise and liberal policy invite to her aid capital from abroad. Let her legislature give all those guaranties that a discreet and cautious man could reasonably ask. Let the faith of the state as pledged by its legislature, be sacred even to the extent of never setting up or attempting to enforce a doubtful claim of power or right. Let her legislature, rising

superior to all sectional and personal considerations, continue steadily to pursue this course of policy, and before the present generation shall have passed away, Maine will have that position among her sister states, to which her extent, her varied and abundant resources, and the enterprise and energy of her people entitle her to aspire.

It is with views and sentiments such as these, that your memorialists present themselves before you in behalf of their fellow citizens, for the purpose of praying the legislature to grant them and their associates a charter, for the establishment and construction of a rail road, connecting the Atlantic ocean and the river St. Lawrence, and leading from Portland in the general direction of Sherbrooke and Montreal to the boundary of Maine.

WM. P. PREBLE,
JOSIAH S. LITTLE,
JOHN MUSSEY,
JOHN B. BROWN,
ABNER SHAW,
JOHN DOW,
CHARLES COBB,
FRANKLIN TINKHAM,
JOHN ANDERSON,
GEORGE TURNER,
THOMAS HAMMOND,
WILLIAM KIMBALL,
ST. JOHN SMITH,
W. E. GREELEY,
CHARLES E. BARRETT,
AUGUSTINE HAINES,
ELIPHALET CASE,
JOHN NEAL,
CHARLES Q. CLAPP.

Portland, December 24, 1844.

Letter from a Committee of the Marine Society referred to in the Memorial.

PORTLAND, Dec. 19, 1844.

GENTLEMEN:—

Your letter of the 16th inst., addressed to the Portland Marine Society, was laid before them at their annual meeting on the 17th inst., and was referred to the undersigned as a committee for the purpose of answering your inquiries.

In our opinion, Portland harbor is of much easier access and less dangerous than Boston harbor to run for in any season, and particularly in winter, when N. E. snow storms are prevalent. If near the land and overtaken with a snow storm and thick weather, with the wind from E. N. E. to N. E., and it becomes necessary to haul off, you have sufficient room for a long drift, say from eighty to ninety miles to Cape Cod, and if it is possible to carry storm-sails, you will have a much longer drift.

Not so in such a storm in Boston bay, where you have land on both sides.

We consider no port in the United States more difficult of access than Boston harbor, with an easterly gale and thick weather. Should you make the land, perhaps you would not know what part of the coast it is. And the least mistake would prove fatal; for being so far up the bay it would be difficult, if not impossible, to extricate your ship.

As regards the harbor of Portland being closed with ice, we learn, from Capt. L. Moody of the Observatory, that for the last thirty years, the entrance to the harbor has not been obstructed but twice, and at no time has it been so obstructed, but what good anchorage could be had within two miles of the city.

The least depth of water at neap tides is seventeen feet, and that only for a small space, the remainder of the channel has from four to five fathoms at low water. The average flow of the tides is nine feet.

The harbor of Portland is undeniably one of the best on the eastern coast, on account of its easy access, and safe anchorage.

In consequence of which, there are no pilots required—every master is considered competent to take his vessel out and bring her into this excellent harbor, by night or day.

It is the opinion of the committee, and also of Capt. L. Moody, who has been a strict observer of the harbor relative to ice in the winter months for thirty-seven years, that it may be kept clear as far up as the wharves, for fifty dollars per year.

The difference of distance from Cape Sable to Boston Light and Portland Head, is forty-seven miles in favor of Portland. The distance from Portland Head to the city, is three miles, and from Boston Light to that city, is nine miles.

Enclosed is a small chart, showing the relative situations of Boston and Portland, and the courses and distances of each from Cape Sable.

Respectfully your ob't servants,

L. WEEKS,
SAM'L ROBINSON,
JOEL HALL.

To the Hon. W. P. PREBLE and J. S. LITTLE.



STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
January 7, 1845. }

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

SAMUEL BELCHER, *Clerk.*