

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING THE

EXTRA SESSION OF 1853, AND SESSION OF 1854.



Augusta:

WILLIAM T. JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1854.

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 34.

REPORT

Of the Committee on Railroads and Bridges, on the Memorial of the President and Directors of the European and North American Railway Company.

THE Committee on Railroads and Bridges, to whom was referred the Memorial of the President and Directors of the European and North American Railway Company, praying the Legislature of Maine to ask assistance from the Government of the United States in aid of the construction of said Railway in the State of Maine,

REPORT:

That the experience of the last two years has fully confirmed all the views expressed by the Legislature, in their resolves, approved March 27, 1852, asking assistance from the United States government, in behalf of said Railway; to which resolves and the report accompanying the same the Committee respectfully invite the attention of the Legislature, as embodying the views entertained upon this subject.

The vast expense required to construct a first-class railroad, in extension of the present lines, from the city of Bangor to the city of Halifax, has heretofore lead many to doubt the

ability of the people directly interested in such line, to furnish the necessary means for its construction; while at the same time, the importance of the work has been fully admitted. Under this belief, efforts were made to induce capitalists from England to undertake the work, upon such terms as were within the ability of the people directly interested in its construction to command; and it is gratifying to know, that the project was received with favor in the English market. A contract for the construction of that portion of the line lying in the Province of New Brunswick was entered into in the fall of 1852 by parties of ability to carry out the work, with such means as the government and people of the Province could supply; and there is evidence that the money required to construct the entire line, from Halifax to Bangor, could have been obtained in England, had the necessary legislation in Maine and in Nova Scotia been seasonably obtained. The project of the European and North American Railway, in connection with the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, commanded entire confidence in the British market, up to the time when the peace of Europe was threatened, in the early part of 1853, by the hostile attitude of Russia. The political events of the past year checked commercial enterprise throughout Europe, and rendered it impossible to obtain capital for new undertakings. While, therefore, we entertain no doubt of the continued popularity of this enterprise in England, we cannot look for assistance toward the construction of that part in Maine, while the present uncertainty exists as to European affairs.

The government of the Province of New Brunswick, having become largely interested in the work, both as a subscriber to its stock, and by a loan of its credit to the corporation, there seems to be no reason to doubt that her portion of the line will be built within the time limited therefor in the contract.

The Province of Nova Scotia has recently adopted measures for the construction of a line from Halifax to the frontier of New Brunswick, as a public provincial work, and the necessary legislation for this purpose has been perfected.

Although the work of construction is going forward in the lower Provinces, it is well understood that the comparative progress of these works will much depend upon the certainty of the early completion of the entire line from the city of Halifax to a point of connection with the railways of the United States and Canada;—for, without the construction of the entire line, securing an uninterrupted mail route between New York and Halifax, thereby shortening the transit of mails between New York and London, the great object of the enterprise will not be reached.

To provide the means for that portion of the route between the city of Bangor and the frontier of New Brunswick, is a task devolving upon the people of Maine.

It appeared, before your committee, that a proposition was submitted in August last by the same parties as those engaged in constructing the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, for the building of the portion in Maine; said parties furnishing 80 per cent. of the entire capital. This offer, it is understood, was contingent upon the continuance of a favorable money market in England; since which, the threatening aspect of a general war in Europe has compelled the postponement of its execution. Under these circumstances, we think it proper that an effort should be made to secure to this line the favor and assistance of the general government. Congress has already made large appropriations to aid in the construction of mail steamers, and annually contributes, from the national treasury, for their support. The object of the appropriations was to obtain increased facilities and greater dispatch in the receipt of intelligence from Europe.

It was clearly shown, in the proceedings of the Legislature of Maine, in 1852, that by the construction of this line of railway to Halifax, still greater dispatch would be given to the communications between the two countries; and upon this ground we think Congress might be successfully appealed to. The claim upon the general government has not been insisted upon, or earnestly pressed upon their attention, for the reason

that private enterprise seemed, at one time, equal to its accomplishment. But from the course of events in Europe it is quite evident that the construction of this road must be postponed, if made to depend upon the condition of affairs abroad. Under these circumstances, the committee believe that Congress should be appealed to, and the aid of the general government demanded; and that the Executive of Maine should be clothed with the necessary authority to make known the claims of the enterprise upon the general government.

In view of the foregoing, the committee ask leave to report the following resolves.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVES asking assistance from the United States Government, in behalf of the European and North American Railway.

Resolved, That the necessities of business require
2 that the most certain, as well as the most rapid means
3 of communication should be maintained between
5 Europe and America, and that the aid of the general
6 government toward private enterprise in the trans-
7 mission of the mails across the Atlantic ocean, should
8 be based upon the plan of compensating those who
9 will transmit the mails with regularity and dispatch,
10 in the least time, between New York and London.

Resolved, That by the completion of the line of the
2 European and North American Railway, and by
3 means of swift steamers in connection with a subma-
4 rine line of telegraph between the ports of the two
5 continents, nearest each other, the transit between

4 to the European and North American Railway as it
5 may be in the power of congress to grant.

Resolved, That the governor be requested to trans-
2 mit a copy of these resolves to the president of the
3 United States and to each house of congress, to the
4 postmaster general, and to the executive authorities
5 of such states as may be interested in the success of
6 this enterprise.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
April 15, 1854. }

ORDERED, That six hundred copies of this report, and accompanying resolves, be printed for the use of the Legislature.

JOHN J. PERRY, *Clerk.*