

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

DOCUMENTS

PRINTED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

A. D. 1858.



AUGUSTA:

STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1858.

THIRTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.]

[No. 18.

MEMORIAL.

~~~~~

*To the Hon. Senate and House of Representatives :*

The undersigned, citizens of Piscataquis county, represent that the mineral resources and wealth of this county, in slate and iron particularly, are great; that a communication by railroad with a harbor which remains open during the year, would greatly tend to develop these resources of wealth :

That we feel we are not inferior in natural resources—in slate, iron, marble, land for agricultural purposes, timber—to our sister counties and wish to stand on equal footing with them, in any grants made for the purpose of development. We ask, that an appropriation be made for an exploration, and survey of a railroad route from Belfast or Frankfort, to, or near Newport, thence through such part of Piscataquis county as in your judgment would most tend to develop her resources ; also for an appropriation for a geological survey of said county.

CHARLES A. EVERETT, and others.

Feb. 10, 1858.

In aid of the petition, I would respectfully represent, that in the centre of the State, is a slate formation, extending miles east, west and north ; that fourteen miles from this centre, are Katahdin iron works, south westerly from Katahdin mountain, forty or forty-five miles. These works and their operations, are so well known in this

State, that they need no detailed account from me. Some few miles from this point, on lands, owned by the State, are beds or veins of marble, from which a sample was broken, and which I wish to deposit for exhibition. And still further on, are beds of native iron ore, from which a sample was taken. And beds or veins of freestone are also known to exist in this region.

The sample of slates, which is deposited with the other samples, was taken from my own quarry, where my men are now at work, and I feel some delicacy in offering this sample, lest it should be construed into a cheap mode of advertising my own wares. But knowing that hundreds of quarries *may* be opened and worked to as good advantage as mine, and believing that the State has a deeper interest in this matter than any individual can have—to illustrate and strengthen my position, I offer this sample, and trust the House will receive it in the spirit with which it is offered.

It is my purpose, in this memorial, to show that more wealth exists in this slate formation, than the State ever has, or will, realize from her timber lands, and that it is in the power of the State so to encourage and advance the manufacture of slates, as to add greatly to her wealth and *population*, which she can secure in no other way.

I have been twenty-one years in the lumbering business, and nine years in the business of quarrying and making slates, and I can make myself better understood, by sometimes giving the result of my experience and observation; therefore, I hope the House will pardon me, if I sometimes speak of myself in connection with this matter.

Veins of roofing and table slate of unknown extent, are found in this slate formation, which are worked at but two points, and there, only to a limited degree, but giving constant employment to from seventy-five to one hundred men. This slate, for strength, durability, beauty and uniformity of color, is not excelled by any other slate in use, or that is known to exist in any part of the world. This may be shown by the written testimony of the best judges among the importers, and operators in the article. The slates, wet or dry, give a clear, perfect metallic ring, and actual experiments have tested their excellence. It is confidently believed, and boldly asserted, that no other slates have yet been brought to notice

in America, which will compare favorably with the Welch slates. While the slate in Maine, for roofing, claims superiority over every other slate produced in America or Europe, and invites comparison and challenges test.

Large quantities of slate are annually used in the United States. Less have been used in Maine than in any other of the seaboard States. Within a few years, however, these slates have been laid; and the demand for them must continue to increase, as good shingles become scarce and costly among us. For more than a century past, experiments have been going on in the European countries, where slates were not easy of access, and in *some places* where they were, to find a substitute for slates, for the covering of their roofs, copper, tin, lead, zinc, earthen tiles, tar and sand, cloth and paper, with their various preparations of tar, pitch, and asphaltum, have been used and laid by, each in its turn *in and out* of favor. Sanguine individuals endeavored to improve upon, and cure the failures of their equally sanguine predecessors. *All* have failed, but the most costly failures have been of the tinned roofs, where the best material was used, and a body of white lead given to it, to make it imperishable, at an expense of twice the cost of slating. But the action of the elements, in a few years, made "*very little, round holes* in it," and the water found its way *through*, and the tin its way off.

*Copper*, for roofing, is less expensive; old copper will always sell.

Earthen tiles stand next to slates, in the absence of *good* shingles.

The inexorable laws of nature, which compel matter to expand under the action of heat, and contract under that of cold, and perhaps other causes, of which your memorialist is most profoundly ignorant, have operated unfavorably upon the material used as a substitute for slate in the old country. In our own country, experiments are quite as numerous, and our fellow citizens quite as sanguine, and as slow to profit by the failures of their predecessors. Men who have passed by the lots of tin stripped from the roofs in East Boston, will still *tin* their roofs; and those who have commented quite freely upon the experiments made upon the buildings in the navy yard at Brooklyn, before they received their slate roofing, will still experiment upon their own roofs. But slates are *used* and will be used, and their use will increase among us, because

*some men* do not love to be burned up. We may pity their weakness, but they shrink from it, though well insured, and they may believe that a slated roof is some protection against fire, as do the insurance companies, whose lowest premiums are on risks beneath slated roofs, other things being equal. And some may be possessed with the strange desire to finish the top of their houses as permanently as they do the bottom; and while they choose granite for its durability, as their foundation, on the same principle they may choose slates for their roof, while others wishing to use water from their cisterns, for culinary purposes, use slate for the purity it imparts to, or impurity it saves from the water. Others may think it poor economy to use shingles on their barns and outbuildings, knowing that from five to twenty-five years, as their shingles are good, bad or worse, they must patch or make new their roofs, while a fair slated roof would cost them at the beginning, but little, if any more, than a roof *covered with the best of shingles*. Still others will think it worth their while to pay a *little* more for the slated roof, that their slaters may afford to lay the slates as permanently as their masons lay their granite foundations.

Various other causes will help to increase the use of slates, such as the growing scarcity of suitable timber for good shingles.

Thousands of tons of slates are shipped from Europe to this country annually, and thousands of gold and silver are shipped from this country to Europe annually, to pay for these importations. All these slates can be supplied by Maine—and of the very *best quality, only by Maine*—until a better article is discovered on this continent, than is now known out of this State. To quarry and manufacture these slates, would give constant and remunerating employment to thousands of families. I have paid my slate-makers each from \$350 to \$400 annually. Five thousand men could not supply the demand for slates used on this continent. One gentleman in Boston, has imported more than four thousand tons in a year. Five thousand times three hundred and fifty, is \$1,750,000 annually, which is a moderate demand for slates in America, which Maine is well able to supply. It is as true now, as when first spoken, that “where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.” \$1,750,000, to be scattered from among the quarry-men and slate-makers of Maine, would call around them the farmers to supply

their tables, the lumberman, the brick-maker, the stone-cutter, the black-smith, the carpenter and mason, to build their houses—while the school-house and church would bring the school-master from abroad, and settle the pastor. The tailor, the shoe-maker, the merchant, and the *man of emetics*—all would be needed. Men of all professions, all classes, from the hewers of wood and drawers of water, to the men of literary and scientific pursuits. The combined efforts of all, would be required to project and carry forward, the improvements and enterprises, which underlie the permanent and rapid growth of an industrious, peaceable, intelligent, and contented population of producers, upon whom are based the true riches and importance, the strength and glory of a State.

Maine has manifested a deep interest in her *Pine-tree*, and watched over it with a kind of State pride, ever since *Dirigo* was written upon her escutcheon.

Lumber has been the staple production of the State, and for years, quite a portion of her legislation has been on timber and timber lands. The most important Committee in her Legislature, next to her Judiciary, has been her land committee. Our Land Agents have expended thousands in explorations and surveys of her timber and timber lands.

The rights of the State in her timber and lands have been carefully guarded, *regarded*, and through a mistaken policy, I think shamefully *disregarded*. Where are we now? and where are the proceeds of the timber or lands? In the coffers of the State? or the pockets of her citizens? Neither—and not because actual value was not in them, not because the actual operator lacked energy, or was ignorant of his business in taking off the lumber. The class of men cannot be found, who carry more energy into their business, than do the lumbermen of the Penobscot and Kennebec; and what they do not know about matters connected with their business, and *some things* not so connected, the novice need not try to learn. But the men of middling interest, the actual operators who would cut and manufacture a given amount of lumber *each year*, whose interest it is the duty and true policy of the State to protect, have been driven from their homes to seek more promising fields for their enterprise and ingenuity. The lands, which should have been sold to actual settlers only, have been disposed of by the six miles square,

and the timber which should have been sold only to the actual operator, as wanted from year to year, for the mills and markets, has been disposed of by the ten townships. The rich only could buy them, and they buy them only to increase *their* riches—not to increase the riches or population of the State. Hence, of the men of middling interest, the actual operator, is demanded a stumpage of one-third, one-half or *more* of the timber when delivered in the booms. The pulsations of the lumberman's purse are carefully noted, and if signs of life appear, the knife is applied a little deeper the next time.

It is not for the interest of the owners of large tracts of land, whose principal value is in the timber, that is now, or that may be, hereafter upon them, to have settlers whom they cannot control, on or very near their lands. Taxes and fires are the dread of large landed proprietors.

True, the prices paid for these lands never exceed, unless the purchaser mistakes the quantity of timber upon them, the amount of cash that can be realized from the timber within three or four years, so that should they burn, the timber can be taken off before the worms reduce its value to a sum less than was paid, or agreed to be paid, for them. The State receives for these lands, when the notes are paid, just what the timber upon them is worth when *burnt dead*, and it should be understood that no timber township is without more or less good settling land upon it. Some, one-quarter, some half, or more of the land is not timber land, and is not taken into the account as of value by the purchaser. And hence too, we so often see our poverty stricken, and sparsely settled back regions, so often abandoned.

For thirty years past, Maine has cut and manufactured, from one to three millions of dollars worth of lumber annually—making in the aggregate, more than fifty millions of dollars, and grown poor under the operation. Her citizens are being scattered to the four winds, farms are deserted, so that some sections little more than hold good their population from year to year. In not a few door yards, where the children played, now grows the thistle and the mullein.

The Puritanic belief obtains—and I thank God for it—that the Creator of the world does all things *well*, and wisely. He has given us in Maine, except in the valley of the Aroostook, a hard,



stony soil, compared with some other parts of our vast country, but has compensated for it, by underlaying it with rocks and minerals of incalculable value. Our hard soil yields willingly to the wants of man, under wise cultivation, when copiously watered with the sweat of the brow. When this is withheld the yield is light and reluctant. Thorns also, and thistles are brought forth to put us in perpetual remembrance of the conditions upon which we shall eat bread, and to remind us that our homes, to be happy, must be permanent and *cared for*; that our efforts, which, of necessity must be persevering, should be concentrated, and not diffusive.

Hundreds of men, some with and some without families, leave their homes in the fall; some, before, *others* when the farm's fall work is done, to spend from four to eight months in the woods, and on the river, cutting, hauling, and driving the lumber, which arrives at the booms, generally, in June, too late for the farm's spring work, which must be left undone, or poorly done, by such help as the most masculine member of the family, left at home, can procure at that busy season. Some finding it too late for a spring's work on their farms, hire out on the river, where pay is ready and better than for farm work in the country. Others go home, cut their hay, and get ready for another six or eight months route, for which they get about five dollars more *per month* than they would get, or give, for labor on the farm; hence, the farm, and family, are badly husbanded, the buildings go to decay, the fences fall down, and the farm "runs out."

Home joys wither away, hopes once fondly cherished are blasted, and then "comes the winter of their discontent." The mistaken man persuades himself, that his farm is a bill of expense to him, that it costs him more labor to raise one barrel of flour, than to "*work out*," and earn two. His attachment to his soil and home is loosened, and he parts from them, without regret, at the offer that puts him in possession of ready money sufficient to bear him to the *West*. Out of more than six hundred men that I have employed in the lumber business, I cannot learn that one-fourth of them are now in Maine. On a recent tour west, I met with them in Massachusetts, in Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota; some left more twenty years since, others more recently; and I could now much

more readily call around me a crew of seventy-five or one hundred of my old hands, out west, than in Maine.

If our State will manifest the same deep interest in her mineral resources, that she has ever taken in her timber, and expend in the county of Piscataquis,—as judiciously as it may be expended—as much money as has already been expended in the county of Aroostook, the egress of her population may be stayed, and a rapid and permanent ingress promoted.

No class of our adopted citizens is sooner wrought into good Yankees, than the intelligent Welchmen, from the quarries in Wales.

Let us pay on slates only the average prices charged by the railroads in our land, on heavy freight, give us easy access from our quarries to our markets, and Maine can supply America with slates, so as to defy competition, coin money out of the operation, and build up a shipping port, which shall become to America, what Bangor in Wales, is to Europe.

The limerock of Rockland and its neighboring towns, is, and has long been, a source of wealth to their enterprising inhabitants. It is true, their solid men have more easy access to other banks, than to their banks of limerock, but to none that discount so freely as these.

They have the Grand Banks, the Clam banks and the banks of Limerock—these three—but the greatest of these, is the Limerock. Their discounts are sent out by the cargo into every port on the seaboard, from Eastport to New Orleans, and are spread more evenly, and over a greater surface—give stability and permanency to more "*bricks*," than the same articles sent from any other point in our country. Among the natural productions and resources of the State, this, of the limestone region, very justly claims a high rank, and no one questions the claim; but bring the mountainous mineral region, lying a few miles northwardly of the centre of the State, into your shipping ports, and where your limerock produces hundreds of dollars, your slaterock will produce thousands; and where your limerock gives employment to hundreds, your slaterock would employ thousands.

If the geological exploration and survey of the county proves,

as I have no doubt it will, that extensive beds or veins of native iron ore, are found cropping out to the surface, at various places, from near the county of Somerset, through Piscataquis into Aroostook; if it proves that these beds or veins are inexhaustable, or very great in extent, and as rich as the Pennsylvania mines; if it proves, as I have no doubt it will, that extensive beds or veins of the fire-proof rock, with which furnaces are lined, of quality superior to that brought from Pennsylvania or New Jersey, abounds in the vicinity of beds of ore; if it proves that the forests, in their pristine grandeur and extent, are ready to furnish coal for the furnaces, then I will not undertake to prove how much it will add to the wealth and population of the State, when our iron mines shall be worked as extensively and profitably as the iron mines of *Pennsylvania*, or the iron veins of England.

Nor will I, at this time, undertake to reckon the amount of business the iron and slate will give a railroad, nor for how much or how little per ton, it can be carried, nor how much the road will cost, nor how much its capital stock will be worth, nor will I now stop to speak particularly, of the vast quantities of ship-timber, unlimited for years, except by the demand, that a railroad would bring into the market—all which timber is valueless comparatively, until some cheap mode of transportation is introduced, by which it can be brought to market. And here I would say, and I think I understand whereof I affirm, that the heavy freights which would now be given to a railroad from a point near the centre of the State, to a shipping port, would pay the interest of one million of dollars. I leave it for others to calculate how much the road would cost.

Nor will I now stop to compute the value it would add to the real estate at, and for some distance around the terminus of a road that would virtually bring the whole interior of the State to the open sea, or take an open sea into the interior of the State, thus putting us into communication with the rest of mankind, through some open harbor, like Belfast, easy of access from the sea, with natural capacity and safety of anchorage, rivalling the beautiful bay of Venice.

Such an influx of business and population necessary to do the business that such a road would turn into any port, must add greatly to its wealth, and soon make of any place, the chief city of the State.

If Maine is now true to herself, she will direct the attention and

energies of her people to the point where may be found the elements of her permanent prosperity and strength, and by wise legislation encourage the development and manufacture of her native, staple productions. And by exploring for a railroad route from some shipping port through our mineral regions into the Aroostook, it will be seen that thousands of acres not in that favored county, and though not so high in public estimation, will not suffer in comparison with any other lands in the State, and though they may not have been the objects of such maternal solicitude and fostering care as other acres, yet are quite as worthy of it, and will quite as soon make adequate returns for any outlay the State may make upon them.

By the adoption of wise measures of State policy, and a prudent administration of State affairs, we shall recover from the condition in which our mistakes in the management of our public domain has placed us; wealth and population will roll in upon us, and our State will take the position that God designed she should occupy among her sister States. The State of Maine may become the *main* State—and though her Pine-tree is fallen, and the repose of her moose disturbed, Dirigo is still emblazoned upon her escutcheon, and when her men with the scythe and anchor shall unite with the miner, the manufacturer and mechanic, she will indeed lead the way.

It now costs more to transport slates from our quarries to our markets, than from the quarries in Wales, to our markets, and while slates are taken from the quarries in Vermont to Boston, Providence and New York, by railroad, at \$4 per ton, it now costs from our quarries to Boston, \$7 per ton, and to Providence and New York, from \$7.50 to \$8 per ton. A railroad would enable us to deliver our slates in Boston, at \$4 per ton, and in Providence and New York, at from \$4.50 to \$5 per ton, and then be the best paying road in New England, because of the great amount of business it would have to do. And then instead of employing five thousand men producing \$1,750,000, ten thousand would be required to meet the demand, producing \$3,500,000 annually.

ADAMS H. MERRILL.

## STATE OF MAINE.

---

RESOLVE in relation to the state granting aid for exploration and survey of a railroad route to or from Aroostook.

---

*Resolved,* That when the state grants an appropriation for the exploration and survey of a railroad route to or from Aroostook, said route shall run through the mineral sections of the county of Piscataquis.

## STATE OF MAINE.

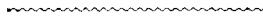
---

RESOLVE authorizing the land agent to cause a geological examination of the mineral region in the county of Piscataquis.

---

*Resolved,* That the land agent be, and is hereby authorized and required to cause an examination to be made of the slate, iron, marble and other mineral resources of the county of Piscataquis, and to report results to the governor and council; *provided* the expense of the same shall not exceed five thousand dollars.

STATE OF MAINE.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Feb. 17, 1858.

On motion of Mr. COMSTOCK, of Lubec, this Memorial, accompanying the petitions of Charles A. Everett, and others, was taken from the table, and 3,000 copies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

GEO. W. WILCOX, *Clerk.*