

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1862.

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AUGUSTA:  
STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.  
1862.

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# FORTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE.

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SENATE.

No. 21.

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## REPORT

*Of the Joint Select Committee "to consider Acts and Resolves rendering the State liable to pay money, etc."*

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This Committee have had under consideration all the various propositions for retrenchment in the several departments of the State Government, and submit the following report of their conclusions :

In examining the subject, they have been guided by one or two general principles which they regard as incontrovertible, and which simplify the application of the methods of retrenchment. They have endeavored to ascertain with precision the directions in which, and the amounts to which the State expenditures can be diminished, without trenching upon any of those appropriations which affect the vital interests of the State, or which bring back a pecuniary profit to the treasury. They have felt it to be the more necessary to be explicit on these distinctions, because in a time of national peril like the present, when the country is staggering under heavy burdens of financial embarrassments, and visions of enormous taxation terrify the timid, the unqualified idea of retrenchment in expenditure commends itself strongly to the imagination.

What may be *saved* seems tangible and of great value, and the homely adage, "a penny saved is two pennies earned," assumes an appearance of wisdom beyond its real deserts. Retrenchment, when applied in too sweeping a manner, becomes a fatal mistake in political economy, and the adage requires modification when it is proved to us that in some circumstances a penny *spent* may be three pennies *earned*. Saving is not always economy, nor does the going

*without* in one direction ensure that we shall have more to go *with* in another. True economy for a nation consists more in the adoption of a wise system of expenditures, which in stimulating the energy and employing the capital of the community, brings back wealth into the treasury rather than in narrowing down the disbursements to a pinched insufficiency, and thus discouraging enterprise, and producing stagnation. The life of a State is in the advancement it makes in general intelligence, in the development of its resources, and in the importance which these enable it to attain through competition with other States. Through these, it offers inducements to new settlers, and satisfies the demands which its citizens have a right to make upon it. Citizenship has its birthrights from the State as the child has from the parent, and these obligations should be recognized in the action of the Government. Facilities for education and opportunities for the exercise of honest industry, are the positive right of those who dwell upon the soil and pay allegiance to the Government. The development of internal resources is to the State what self-culture is to the individual, and so long as such development keeps pace with the expenditures, so long is the State rich, even though its outlay be enormous, and its annual disbursements increase beyond the ratio of its population.

The successful management of the internal resources of a State is immensely influenced by the attitude assumed by the Legislature of the State in regard to those expenditures which come directly under governmental supervision, and by the more or less liberal patronage it extends to individual effort. By increasing emulation and provoking new experiments, it brings out all the power of the community. In seasons of careless prosperity, a certain profusion in State expenditure is not only admissible but often productive of the happiest general results; but in times like these, it becomes necessary to curtail that profusion, to retrench where retrenchment is unhurtful to any true interest, to make choice as to what expenses shall be retained, what temporarily laid aside, and what diminished in quantity. There are, in the opinion of this Committee, several directions in which during a time of war our expenses may be reduced without serious injury to the material prosperity, and without dwarfing our State among her compeers. There are other directions in which too strict an economy will be detrimental to the communi-

ty, and put back the growth of the State. The omission of certain encouragements to labor, the absence of assistance in some lines of practical experiment, the check in certain sources of information, will be disastrous in the highest degree. They will impede the State in the very efforts she will have to make to meet her part of the pecuniary liabilities which accumulate daily on the country. There are outlays on which we must largely depend for the money which must flow into our treasury from some source, if we would hope to meet our expenses.

These general principles, thus briefly laid down, have determined the Committee in regard to the selection of occasions for retrenchment. The following matters have in this connection come before them: The salaries of State and County officers, the Reform School, Insane Hospital, State's Prison, State Printing, County Jails, Common Schools, State and County Agricultural Societies, Geological Survey, &c.

#### *State Officers.*

As to the salaries of State officers, your Committee are satisfied that they are no larger than is necessary to secure the services of faithful, competent and honest officers, and they believe that the resources of the State justify the continuance of the salaries as at present fixed.

This is well illustrated in the case of the present State Treasurer, whose character and efficiency are such as to permit our citizens to rest in perfect confidence that faithfulness, exactness and honesty will be used in the care and management of the State Treasury. The Committee therefore recommend no reduction of his present compensation. By an act offered in the House and referred to this Committee, it was proposed to reduce the number of Bank Commissioners to one—there being two at the present time, and also to abolish the office of Assistant Land Agent. With reference to the first proposition, if it be admitted that there is any necessity for Bank Commissioners at all—of which there would seem to be no doubt—the Committee is of opinion that if the duties of the office be faithfully discharged, the labor could not well be done by one person. The number of banks which it is their duty to investigate and examine last year was sixty-nine, with an aggregate capital of

\$15,946,743, and of Savings Banks, fourteen, with deposits to the amount of \$1,708,961, not including the Calais Savings Bank, and People's Savings Bank at Rockland, which were incorporated in 1861. This service cannot, in the opinion of the Committee, be properly performed by one Bank Commissioner, and if it could, the importance of unbiased action and the necessity of mutual check, the one upon the other, would weigh much with your Committee in recommending that the law remain as it is and that the number be not reduced.

The duties of the Land Agent are such that the services of an Assistant cannot be dispensed with, in any view of economy to the State.

#### *County Officers.*

The salaries of County officers have been carefully examined, and although your Committee would not, in ordinary times, consider them, as a whole, too high, if the several offices are filled by competent men, they believe that in the present emergency many of them ought to be reduced; and in several instances, they have learned that the present incumbents have offered to perform the duties of their places at a reduced rate of compensation, as an earnest of their desire to bear their portion of the State's burden. While therefore a reduction is recommended of the salaries of many of the County officers, they consider it more appropriate to leave the matter to the several county delegations, who it is understood are taking action thereon.

#### *County Commissioners.*

But there is one matter pertaining to county expenses, in which your Committee have made an especial recommendation of a change, which if adopted, will, it is believed, save the State many thousands of dollars every year, and at the same time ensure to the counties a more speedy, safe and satisfactory performance of the required services, viz: to abolish the Court of County Commissioners and to substitute therefor, a court similar to the old Court of County Sessions, to consist of one Judge, to be elected by the people and to hold his office for three years, with power to appoint assistants to examine and lay out roads, and for other necessary purposes. The detail of advantages expected to be derived from this change, it is

not necessary to state at length here. By direction of this Committee an order has been introduced into the Senate, requesting the Committee on the Judiciary to inquire into the expediency of making this change and to report a bill thereon.

*Insane Hospital.*

Your Committee have also recommended a change in the law requiring the State to pay back to the cities or towns made chargeable for the support of insane persons, having no legal settlement in the State, who are committed to the Insane Hospital, the sum of \$2.50 per week, and to reduce it to \$1.50, and have reported an act embracing this change which has already been passed.

*Public Printing.*

The Committee think a saving may be made in the direction of the State Printing, and have reported a "Resolve to rescind certain resolves, and providing for the printing and distribution of Public Documents."

By the resolve it is proposed to reduce the

Annual Report of State Treasurer from	2,000	to	350.
“ “ of Land Agent from	2,000	to	350.
“ “ of Attorney General from	1,000	to	350.
“ “ of Bank Commissioners from	1,500	to	350.
“ “ of Supt. Insane Hospital from	1,500	to	350.
“ “ of Warden of State Prison from	1,000	to	350.
“ “ of Supt. of Reform School from	3,000	to	350.
“ “ Adjutant General from	1,000	to	500.
“ “ Supt. of Schools from	5,000	to	1500.

And 350 of such other documents as the Governor and Council may deem necessary for the Legislature. And that none of the several reports shall contain more than 75 printed pages, of the size now in use, unless by order of the Governor and Council.

*County Jails and Bounty on Animals.*

They also recommend that the board in our county jails shall be reduced from \$2.50 to \$1.75 per week ; and a repeal of the resolves giving "Bounty on Animals."

*Reform School.*

As all questions pertaining to this institution have been referred to the Committee especially appointed for this purpose, it will not be necessary to make any suggestions at length with reference to continuing the usual appropriations; but your Committee cannot forbear saying that in their opinion the usefulness and importance of it are becoming daily more and more apparent. They cannot recommend any reduction of the appropriations under the estimate made by the present very able board of Trustees, who must be the best judges as to what is necessary.

*Common Schools.*

The propriety of continuing the appropriations for educational purposes, seems to the Committee beyond a doubt. The general intelligence of the community is of such vast importance, that all other means of retrenchment should be resorted to before this one is touched. The utter inability to remonstrate, of those who would suffer most from a diminution in the number and quality of our common schools—to wit., the children—makes it all the more imperative upon the government to watch over and protect their interests, and to see that there shall be no curtailment in this quarter. The value of our present system is continually manifesting itself; the diffusion of knowledge lifts our citizens into a position which it is their wish and their duty to transmit unimpaired to their children. We have in the war itself an argument for sustaining the institutions of learning among us, which seems of great force. It is to the general education of all classes that we are now indebted for the enlightened zeal and patriotism which send volunteers by thousands to fight for the country they have learned to love, and to give their lives for the laws they have learned to understand, the institutions they have learned to venerate. It is in the common schools that our lads are taught what it is to be an American citizen, that they read of our Washington and our Franklin and of all our great men. Their school-books tell them of the times of the Revolution, and the recital of heroic deeds moves their young hearts with emotions which in days like ours lead them to such battle-fields as Roanoke Island and Fort Donelson. The whole character



of our army is influenced by the training which its members have had in their school days, and one of the best rewards we can offer them for their gallant conduct is the preservation for their children of the means of intellectual culture. Let it be to our honor that through the darkest hour of our country's history, we had the wisdom, forethought and generosity to strain every nerve to keep up the intellectual activity of the age, and to furnish the rising generation with every possible opportunity for progress. The intelligence and knowledge of our citizens are worth far more than money, even were the money spent in education lost in its original form to the treasury. So far from being lost, however, it brings back not only principal but most generous interest. We would take for an example the efforts of a nation across the sea, who in days gone by achieved their independence through struggles more desperate than our own. We read that

“Neither the perils of war, nor the busy pursuit of gain, nor the excitement of political strife, ever caused the Dutch to neglect the duty of educating their offspring to enjoy that freedom for which their fathers had fought. Schools were everywhere provided at the public expense, with good schoolmasters, to instruct the children of all classes in the usual branches of education.”

With reference, therefore, to the proposition of diverting the Bank tax from the common schools, your Committee are of opinion that it would be in the highest degree injudicious, and hurtful to the future interests of the State.

#### *State Agricultural Society.*

The State Agricultural Society have by their own voluntary action made it unnecessary for the Committee to consider the question of continuing the usual amount appropriated to them. By the law as it now stands, they are entitled to \$1,000 from the State this year, but at their recent annual meeting feeling that under present circumstances some retrenchment might be made in the appropriation for agricultural purposes, they very properly suggested in what department the reduction could be made with the least injury; and voted to release the State from any obligation to them this year. By this action, \$1,000 is saved to the State for other purposes.

*Board of Agriculture.*

The labors of the members of this Board are by no means confined to the brief session for which they draw pay. Under its present organization, with reduced numbers and lessened *mileage*, the expenditure for the Board is *inconsiderable*, while the results accomplished are highly valuable.

Upon the expediency of retaining the services of the present Secretary of this Board, it may be proper to state that the Committee were more unanimous than upon any other subject which came under their consideration. The State cannot *afford* to dispense with his services; they can scarcely be over-estimated, and it is a pleasing indication of the progress of public sentiment on the great subject of agriculture, that the valuable services of Mr. Goodale are so generally acknowledged and appreciated. The value of his labors is well set forth by Mr. Perley of the Board of Agriculture, in his recent able and interesting report, from which we make the following quotation:

“Prior to the reorganization of the Board in 1856, the publications of the State were, chiefly, reprints of the reports made to the county societies, and a small edition sufficed to meet the demand. During the past five years, the demand has steadily increased, and has always been far in advance of the supply, notwithstanding an enlargement of the issue. This demand testifies to the appreciation in which they are held in our own State. Abroad, they have been sought for in exchange, often quoted from in the publications of other States, and have been pronounced “models of excellence in the department they represent.” One of the best agricultural authors in our time, resident of another State, in correspondence with one of our number says: “Your worthy Secretary works with a zeal no less ardent than enlightened. In my judgment his reports and suggestions are invaluable to farmers. They excel in directness, and working force, any thing in this class in the course of my agricultural reading.”

Of the *results* of his labors, we may mention two or three instances. In 1857, the Secretary visited Aroostook county—then little known or spoken of—and investigated its capabilities for production. His conclusions formed a large part of the report of that year; and

its publication at once awakened a general interest throughout this and other States. The next year, a body of the editorial fraternity was induced to visit that section. Very soon the inquiries made of the Land Agent, induced the issue of 10,000 copies of a circular, all of which were distributed, affording the desired information, and which was chiefly made up of extracts from Mr. Goodale's Report; and by these and other agencies, a great and steady increase of population and wealth has flowed into that county. In the Secretary's Report for 1860, among other papers of value, we have a treatise on the principles of breeding, which supplies a want long felt by the agricultural community; and much information was thus supplied never before within the reach of farmers. This treatise was republished in Boston, and has been circulated in every State and territory in the Union. Its effects will be visible for many years to come, in the constantly increasing value of our domestic animals, which must necessarily follow enlightened practice. The labors of the Secretary during the past year, investigating our resources in the matter of marine manures, and especially the manufacture of "fish guano," may result in the establishment of a new branch of industry, and the saving of an untold wealth of fertilization to the whole State."

If any change be made with regard to this officer, your Committee would recommend that it should be, by furnishing him an assistant to perform a portion of the labors which might be as well done by a clerk, and thus allow the Secretary more time for labors and investigations of higher value to the State.

#### *County Agricultural Societies.*

The Committee have also examined into the appropriations in aid of County Agricultural Societies, being about five thousand dollars annually. These institutions are productive of much good to the agricultural interests of the State, and have helped largely in the diffusion of knowledge concerning practical farming and the improvement of stock. The value of organizations in carrying on widely extended work is too well recognized to need illustration, and it is believed that in agriculture they have accomplished as much as in any other branch of public effort. The county fairs

bring together the farmers, and they have the opportunity of learning much from the exhibitions which unite the results of their individual labor into a whole. The consequence has been that by combining into societies, many things have been accomplished which individuals could not have attempted with success, and the farmers get better varieties of stock, better implements, and keep up with all the improvements of the age in the culture of the soil. The agricultural interests of our State are of great importance, and should be met in a spirit of generous encouragement by the government. From agriculture a large portion of our taxes is derived, and a narrow policy on this score would drive away some of our most valuable citizens, and be a serious drawback to the State. Maine has some disadvantages of climate, which render the aid given to agriculture by science, of absolute necessity to our farmers. The opportunity afforded for mutual information, the stimulus created by the chance of displaying the degree of success attained, are both supplied by the county fairs, and encouraged by the county associations. The esteem in which they are held is indicated by the fact that while the annual aid from the State is a little less than \$5000, that received from private sources averages nearly \$11,000.

Your Committee are of opinion that the agricultural interests of this State cannot be too carefully protected and watched over. And although at the present time your Committee would not recommend any increased appropriations, it has not escaped their observation, that we are far behind our neighboring States and Provinces in the aid offered to such societies. For example, in New Brunswick, with its population of 250,000, being less than half our own, the aid granted to their county agricultural societies is nearly double the amount given by our State. In Canada, the amount granted by their provincial government is three times greater than the societies raise for themselves. This liberality is fully justified by the advanced position which they have gained in this direction, under such encouragement. As tending to show the importance of these societies in advancing the general resources of our State, it may not be considered amiss to make another extract from the report of Mr. Perley already alluded to. He says :

“ By comparing the United States census returns for 1850 with

those for 1860, we find the number of acres in farms has increased from 2,039,596 to 2,677,136, or about 30 per cent.

Value of farms in 1850, \$54,861,748; in 1860, \$78,688,525; being an increase of 43 per cent.

Value of farm implements and machinery in 1850, \$2,284,537; in 1860, \$3,298,327; being an increase of 44 per cent.

The improvement in stock is greater still, and even surpasses our anticipations, extravagant as these have seemed to many.

Value of stock in 1850, \$9,705,726; in 1860, \$15,437,380; showing an increase of 59 per cent. That this is mainly the result of *improvement* appears from the fact, that in numbers our animals have increased less than 7 per cent. during the same period. This fact is farther shown in the value of slaughtered animals, which in 1850 was \$1,646,773, and had, in 1860, increased to \$2,780,179, or more than 68 per cent!"

The argument to be drawn from these statements is too obvious to need any elaboration at the hands of your Committee. There can be no doubt that a direct encouragement of the agricultural interest is a good investment of State funds, and the Committee would be glad to see inaugurated a still more liberal policy in this direction, to be put in practice at the first moment, when, the war pressure being removed, the State shall have the means to devote to such a purpose. The value of an enlightened policy in this regard, the elevation of agriculture into a science, and the appreciation of it as an element in political economy, cannot be too highly rated. Our State with its large territory, as yet but half reclaimed from the wilderness, offers an immense field for the labor of a sturdy population. But in immediately remunerative prospect to the pioneer it can bear no comparison with the rich prairies of the West or the wild regions of the South West. Science and wisely managed physical force must aid in wringing from the bosom of the earth the treasure she hides beneath our cold and uncongenial clime. The resources are large enough if we draw strongly upon them; if we will, in the measure our means permit, follow the wise course of other nations, in the encouragement of experiment and the reward of those who risk their private fortunes by such ventures as the importation of new stock, and the initiation of new methods of culture. England gives to the agricultural interest an immense

importance; its voice is heard in the councils of the nation; its patrons are the nobles of the land; its friends the best among her scientific men, who analyze her soil and experiment upon all new propositions for its development. Were we in Maine to adopt a similar policy, although the amount would at present be small which we could afford to devote to it, yet provision might be made for its careful increase and gradual disposition, and we should open many sources of future wealth. Take for example, the breeding of sheep. We have at present only 374,195 sheep, and the number is decreasing. They furnish only one-third of the wool needed for home consumption. Our sheep ranges, if filled in the proportion of the area and *population* of Vermont, would possess a million and a half, and in that of England, three millions. They *could* feed seven millions, if well managed, and give us an income of over 7,000,000 of dollars.

The Committee have reported a bill changing the present law in some particulars relating to County Agricultural Societies, and if adopted by the Legislature, it is believed that the interest of the societies will be greatly promoted, while at the same time a less sum will be needed than now, to give them the requisite aid—in other words, about \$1,000 may be saved from the present yearly appropriation, and still the societies be in a better condition than they now are. One of the principal objects of the new act is to discourage the multiplicity of societies in any one county, and to encourage the union of the smaller ones now existing, enabling them to offer larger premiums, and to obtain all the advantages of a more general concentration of action.

Your Committee also recommend the continuance of the Scientific Survey of the State; deeming the advantages derived from it as of immeasurably greater value to the State than the amount of expense involved. The thorough and able report of the Committee especially appointed to consider this subject renders it unnecessary for this Committee to enter into any detailed statement concerning it.

In answer to any objections that may be made against the continuance of these appropriations, on the supposition that the farmers of the State are indifferent to their continuance, the Committee think it proper to state that remonstrances against withholding them have come before them from every county in the State, signed by nearly

three thousand persons, who it is believed, represent the general sentiment on this subject.

Your Committee conclude by saying that in times like these, retrenchment should be made in our public expenses wherever it can be done without endangering the true interests of the State; and in their deliberations, they have endeavored to discriminate in favor of such interests. Courage, in a wise expenditure of the public treasure, for purposes inseparably connected with the development of the vital interests of the State, is hardly less necessary than courage on the field of battle; and the absence of it in the one case, would be scarcely less fatal than in the other.

All which is respectfully submitted.

L. D. M. SWEAT, *Chairman.*





STATE OF MAINE.

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IN SENATE, March 6, 1862.

On motion of Mr. BLUNT,

*Ordered*, That the report of the Committee on Retrenchment be printed for the use of the Legislature.

JAMES M. LINCOLN, *Secretary*.