

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1864.

AUGUSTA:

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1864.

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 5.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE in favor of Maine Wesleyan Seminary and
Female College.

Resolved, That the land agent, under the advice and
2 approval of the governor and council, is hereby directed
3 to convey to the trustees of Maine Wesleyan Seminary
4 and Female College, one township of land, of such
5 quality as will, in the judgment of the governor and
6 council, secure to said seminary and college the sum
7 of ten thousand dollars, and that any proceeds thereof,
8 after defraying the expenses of location and sale, ex-
9 ceeding that sum, shall be paid into the state treasury
10 and placed to the credit of the common school fund ;
11 the said land to be sold in open market after six
12 months' notice in at least three public newspapers
13 in this state ; *provided*, that the said trustees shall
14 safely invest the proceeds of said land as a permanent

15 fund for the use and benefit of said seminary and col-
16 lege, the interest only to be annually expended; *and*
17 *provided further*, that in consideration of this grant,
18 the trustees shall place at the disposal of the governor
19 and council, five perpetual scholarships giving free
20 tuition in said seminary and college, to such persons
21 as may be designated by the governor and council,
22 preference to be given to returned soldiers or their
23 children or the children of such as have fallen in
24 defence of their country, and always to the indigent
25 and meritorious.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

The petitioners represent the Trustees of Maine Wesleyan Seminary and Female College, an institution of learning, located in the town of Readfield. This institution is under the charge of the Methodist denomination, and was first incorporated July 28, 1821, as a charity school. Its beginning was small, the studies pursued being but little elevated above those of the common schools of the time. Its sphere of operation was enlarged from time to time in obedience to the public demand, and its course of study extended, until it now occupies a place but little below that of the ordinary colleges of New England. Its aim was at the first, and ever has been to provide educational privileges for the sons and daughters of the laboring population, who could not well afford the outlay required at more expensive institutions. Its students have come from the work-shop and the farm, from the hills and the valleys of our State, hardened indeed and imbrowned by industrious labor, but thirsting after knowledge. Invited by the inducements held out by this institution, and stimulated by the genial influences sent out through its various channels of communication with the laboring population, many a youth has left his rustic home to embark on a career of effort which has ultimately placed him in a high position of honor and usefulness among his fellow men, who, but for the influence of this institution, would have remained in the humble and uncultivated walks of life.

During the forty years of its existence, this institution has had under its care, in all, over 11,000 students; between five and six thousand of whom have gone forth as teachers; about 3,500 have become farmers, 350 clergymen, 300 lawyers.

This institution has exerted a highly beneficial influence in the cause of education, which has extended not only through the entire State, but even beyond the limits of Maine. It has exerted a healthful moral and religious influence which has gone far toward establishing among its students a high character for morality, so-

briety and usefulness. It has been a nursery of pure patriotic devotion and love of country, nearly four hundred of its students having, since the war began, gone forth to do battle; over fifty of whom have already fallen, either on the battle-field, or through sickness in hospitals. And as an evidence that the fires of patriotism still continue to burn, we adduce the fact that the students have already organized themselves into a company for military drill under the command of returned officers and soldiers, and are thus preparing themselves still further to defend their country.

This institution is now conducted as a higher seminary and female college, the college course being about equal to three-fourths of the course required at Bowdoin College. To place the institution in this high position of usefulness it became necessary to erect new buildings. This was done at a cost of about \$40,000. It also became necessary to increase the number of teachers. The erection and furnishing of the new building absorbed all the means at the command of the Trustees, and still left upon them a debt of several thousand dollars. During the three years that have elapsed since the completion of the building, the debt has been reduced to about \$3,300. Several generous friends have given a pledge to meet the interest on the debt, so that it shall not be drawing upon the funds of the institution or accumulating as an additional burden.

The demand for normal instruction, which has recently sprung up in the State, created a necessity for an additional teacher, whose labors should be confined mainly to giving instruction in this department. Such a teacher has been employed, and a department of normal instruction is now in successful operation.

The means at the command of the Trustees are not now adequate to the payment of the teachers employed. And it is to obviate the necessity of reducing the number of instructors, and thus diminishing the usefulness of the school, that an application is now made to the State for aid.

Your Committee, as in duty bound, have made inquiry into the management of the pecuniary affairs of the institution as well as in regard to the funds heretofore donated to the same by the State. They do not learn that there has ever been any lavish and extravagant expenditure—any squandering of the funds of the institution; but on the contrary they believe its affairs have been economically conducted. It has ever been the aim of the Trustees to make the expenses of the students as light as possible, and to afford all the

facilities in their power to those in indigent circumstances. In the endeavor to do this, expenses have been incurred, and funds exhausted, which, on a different plan, might have been avoided. This has occurred mainly by the establishment of a labor department, by means of which the pupils defrayed a large part of their expenses by the labor of a few hours each day. This plan educated many poor young men; but it worked badly for the institution, drawing so largely upon its funds that it could not be continued, and has long since been abandoned. It did a noble work for the State, but it made the institution poor.

In regard to the aid heretofore furnished by the State, your Committee have ascertained from the public records, that the Legislature has at several times regarded with favor the calls of this institution. By a resolve approved February 20, 1827, one half township of land was granted; by a resolve February 20, 1829, six hundred dollars from the public funds; by a resolve March 30, 1831, two thousand dollars; by a resolve March 23, 1835, one thousand dollars; by a resolve March 4, 1859, five thousand dollars. The grant of land was given at a time when the public lands were selling at a low price, and immediately sold, to meet a pressing demand upon the Trustees, for about three thousand dollars. This sum added to the eight thousand six hundred from the public funds, makes eleven thousand six hundred dollars (\$11,600) as the whole amount of donations from the State. This is exclusive of three hundred dollars paid by the State to this institution as one of the sixteen normal schools established by the Legislature of 1860, which could not be considered a donation. As this institution has given instruction to over eleven thousand pupils, the amount donated by the State is about one dollar for each pupil so instructed. In view of these facts, your Committee believe that the Trustees have but done their duty, under the circumstances, in making their present appeal to the Legislature, and that their prayer ought to be granted. We recommend the passage of the accompanying resolve.

Per Order.

CORNELIUS STONE, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
January 29, 1864. }

Reported by Mr. STONE of Jay, from the Committee on Education, and on motion of Mr. QUINNAM of Bowdoinham, laid on the table and 350 copies of the same, together with the accompanying statement of facts, ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

HORACE STILSON, *Clerk.*