

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1864.



AUGUSTA:

STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1864.

FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 14.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }
Augusta, February 27, 1864. }

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

Herewith I transmit a communication from Governor Andrew of Massachusetts in relation to a concert of the States receiving Land Scrip from the Government of the United States for the endowment of Agricultural Colleges for the disposition of the same. The suggestions of Governor Andrew appear to be eminently practical and wise.

The whole matter is referred to your consideration, and I have no doubt such a conclusion will be reached as will conduce to the interests of the State in this matter.

SAMUEL CONY.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }
 Boston, February 10, 1864. }

To His Excellency, SAMUEL CONY, Governor of Maine:

SIR:—The possession by the several States of large quantities of Public Land Scrip, distributed among the States, for the promotion of the “education of the industrial classes,” by means of Agricultural Colleges, imposes on those charged with its control and sale the duty of carefully considering the means of rendering the fund which this Scrip was intended to create, at once secure and available. Those States having no public lands of the United States within their own boundaries, cannot locate, but must sell or assign this Scrip. If they put their Scrip upon the market, without concurrence of action, and with no common understanding, I fear they will break down the market, and merely throw into the hands of private speculators the means which Congress has dedicated, and which the States are bound to administer, as a trust, for the distribution of knowledge among the children of the people. I have ventured, therefore, to address this letter to the Governors of all the loyal States, with a view to their coöperation in some plan for the common good.

After consultation with persons fully acquainted with the matter of land-warrants and their sale and location, I am led to the following results:

First, The land-warrants on the market but not entered, and those yet to issue, are so few that they will not suffice for the entries of the coming year. Whenever, during the last year, there has been a sudden call for warrants covering even so small a number as ten thousand acres, it has been found impossible to supply them at once upon our seaboard, which is the source of supply; and, consequently, cash has been paid for many entries during the last year.

Second, At least nine-tenths of all the warrants mentioned, issued and unissued, are to soldiers of the war of 1812; and all the warrants of that war are needed in Michigan, because, in that

State only, lands entered with that class of warrants are exempted from taxation for three years.

Third, The issue of new warrants may be regarded as virtually ended, because the large money bounties given to our soldiers are not likely to be followed by grants of land; and in view of the Homestead Bill, and of the financial necessity for husbanding the money coming from speculative entries, there is very slight probability of the passage of any new law giving away land-warrants.

It is, therefore, clear that the several States proposing to sell Agricultural College Land Scrip have it entirely in their own hands to fix the price (less than a dollar and twenty-five cents per acre), at which it shall be sold. It can just as well, by agreement of the States, be sold at a dollar to a dollar and ten cents per acre, as at eighty-five or ninety cents. Before the State of New York put any of her Scrip into the market, warrants were selling at ninety-five cents per acre; and would have been selling at a dollar or upwards, had it not been expected that the Agricultural Scrip would be put upon the market. Of course, the Scrip must be put at a price sufficiently below a dollar and twenty-five cents per acre to make it an object to use scrip instead of money, and to induce speculative entries. Supposing the agreed price to be a dollar and five cents per acre, all the remaining warrants of the war of 1812 would be absorbed by Michigan at *above* a dollar and five cents per acre. Warrants of other wars are so few, that almost all entries in other States, from this time forward, must be made with Agricultural Scrip. The better judgment is, that if Congress shall pass no new law giving away land-warrants, the Agricultural Scrip all will be sold within three years. If an agreement be made to sell at a fixed rate, Congress will be almost sure to pass no such law; because, in addition to the reasons already given, it will be for the interest of each State, through its Congressional Representatives, to pass no law interfering with the receipts of the States from the sale of their Agricultural Scrip.

I would therefore respectfully suggest, that the States intending to sell their Scrip agree to fix the price at a dollar and five cents per acre, and to employ selling agents in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, or one in New York only, whose compensation shall not exceed one-half of one per cent. on sales, and who shall sell for the States proportionately in order of time and amount.

It will be important to have the agency under one head, so that

the sales may be made thus proportionally and equitably, and so that the States may not be competitors against each other for priority of sale. The Scrip can remain in the hands of the several State Treasurers, who can supply it as remittances are from time to time received from the agent.

I have the honor to remain, with the highest respect,

Very truly yours,

JOHN A. ANDREW,

Governor of Massachusetts.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 27, 1864. }

On motion of Mr. FARWELL of Rockland, laid on the table and 350 copies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

HORACE STILSON, *Clerk.*