

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

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FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 3.

RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

To the Governor of the State of Maine:

The Railroad Commissioners respectfully submit the following Report of the examinations made by them of the different railroads in this State.

During the past summer the Commissioners have made a very thorough examination of the railroads in the State, with a view of ascertaining the exact condition of each road in regard to the safety of the bridges, culverts, iron and sleepers, and of every part of said railroads, the neglect of which would endanger the lives of passengers passing over, or of the employees engaged upon them.

We regret the necessity of reporting that in one or two instances the roads were not found in such a state of repair as would justify the Commissioners in issuing a certificate of safety until certain requirements were complied with, while in others the general condition of the roads evidenced that every precaution was taken to insure the safe passage of trains, proving conclusively that the managers of these last named roads have a higher regard for the safety and convenience of travellers passing over them than for the mere paper showing largely increased *net profits* made by neglecting the necessary and proper repairs.

The unexpected and unexampled prosperity which has attended every department of business and trade for the last two years, has affected the railroad interests of the State more perhaps than any other, as is shown by the greatly increased receipts for passengers and freight; and the demand for increased facilities for transportation, the transportation of men and material for the government, and the largely increased travel incident to the great contest now

waging, has taxed the carrying capacity of our railroads to its utmost extent, while the facilities for obtaining iron and rolling stock for the necessary repairs and replacements have been proportionately diminished, owing to the great demand of the government for material of the same character, and the universal demand, all over the country, consequent upon the scarcity of labor and a continually expanding business. While the above mentioned considerations may be urged, perhaps with some degree of fairness, as reasons why certain defects are found in the railroads having their whole length and termini within our State boundaries, they certainly cannot be advanced with any show of justice as a sufficient excuse for neglecting the repairs of a road having between six hundred and seven hundred miles of its line in a neighboring province, where it is acknowledged that labor is cheap and there is no unusual drain upon its material resources. At all events, the fact that there is this great demand upon the working capacity of the railroads in this State, calls for uncommon care and watchfulness on the part of the managers and employees, and for greater vigilance on the part of the State officers under whose supervision they are placed.

We are unable to include in this report the statistics of the business and expenses of the several railroads, as in some instances the reports have not been published, and in others have not been received.

The principal defects disclosed by the examinations of the past summer were found in the rails and sleepers, although a few of the bridges on some of the roads exhibited a negligence or want of care on the part of the managers in the highest degree reprehensible, if not criminal. No argument nor motive of economy can justify the practice of allowing defective or rotten timber to remain in important structures after the strength of the timber is materially impaired. It would be far better to renew a structure prematurely than to sacrifice one life through a false notion of economy.

The examination commenced with the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad on the first day of June, the Commissioners passing over the entire line of the road, on foot and by hand-car, from the State line in Gilead to Portland. The bridges, culverts and cattle guards on this road were found to be in excellent condition, and it is but simple justice to say that the above mentioned structures, taken as whole, are perhaps superior to those of any other railroad in the State. A large proportion of the superstructures of the bridges

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

There are two through routes of travel between Calais on the St. Croix river, and Bangor on the Penobscot: one called "The Shore Route," very circuitous, passing through the towns of Machias, Cherryfield and Ellsworth, the other called the "Air Line Route," passing through the towns of Baileyville, Alexander, Beddington, Aurora, and other towns, to Bangor. On the first named route, the mail conveyance leaves Calais at ten o'clock, A. M., travelling most of the following night, arrives at Bangor the second day, at from four to eight o'clock, P. M. On the "air line" route, it leaves Calais at the same hour, travels all night, and reaches Bangor at from six to ten o'clock the next day. Failing to arrive at Bangor at half-past seven, misses the railroad train from Bangor west, and on Saturdays is detained until Monday in that city.

The mails from the eastern British Provinces pass over the air line route, the distributing office being at Calais.

There are several long and precipitous hills on the air line road, which render it unsuitable for transportation of heavy articles. The principal travel in the winter season from the eastern British Provinces is over this road, and more or less of it during the whole year. The number of passengers passing between Calais and Bangor daily, in the mail conveyances, is estimated at fifteen both ways. This number would be much increased if there were an easier and better road. The present cost of transporting the mails between Calais and Bangor on this route is about \$4,700.

There is now in operation a railroad from Calais to Princeton, a distance of twenty-one miles, and one from Bangor to Milford, a distance of thirteen miles. The distance from the depot in Milford to the depot in Princeton is fifty-nine miles, fourteen of which, through Milford and part of Greenfield, are now travelled to a point where the location of the Milford and Princeton Turnpike commences, near Mr. White's house, in Greenfield. The distance of the line of the turnpike to be made to connect the Milford and Princeton railroads is forty-five miles.

repairs. These officers of the road appeared anxious to do all in their power to comply with the requirements of the Commissioners, but failed from time to time to satisfy us that any progress was being made—the impossibility of procuring iron being alleged as the reason for delay. This may have been sufficient excuse during the past summer, but the fact that the repair of the road has been neglected heretofore from year to year, and that it is now in an unsafe condition, consequent upon such neglect, in the opinion of Commissioners cannot be excused. The following order was issued at the adjourned meeting of the Board, on the eleventh day of August, 1863:

STATE OF MAINE.

Board of Railroad Commissioners, sitting by adjournment at Portland, in the county of Cumberland, this eleventh day of August, 1863.

In May, A. D., 1863, said Board gave two weeks notice by publication in the Kennebec Journal, that being the State paper, that one of said Board would attend at the station of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad Company, in Portland, on the first day of June, 1863, for the purpose of making the examination prescribed by the act approved March 19, 1861, additional to secure the safety and convenience of travellers on railroads. On said first day of June, A. W. Wildes, one of said Board, attended at the place aforesaid, and thence proceeded, among other examinations on said road, along the track of said road, northerly, to the west line of the State, near the station of said company in the town of Gilead. Said Wildes, at the examination aforesaid, found defects in said track and the culverts thereof, which in his opinion would render the passage of passenger trains over said railroad and track hazardous, and he thereupon forthwith notified Solomon T. Corser, the superintendent of said road, of said defects, and required him to shew cause why the same should not be repaired. On the tenth day of June, A. D., 1863, said Corser appeared before said Board, at Portland aforesaid, and said company also appeared by Phineas Barnes, Esq., their attorney, and at the request of said Corser and said Barnes the further hearing of the matter aforesaid, was adjourned to the office of Allen Haines, Esq., in Portland, on Tuesday, this eleventh day of August, A. D., 1863, and at the time and place last mentioned, said Corser appeared, and was by us

fully heard, and thereupon said Board find and determine that neither said Corser nor said company have shown cause, to the satisfaction of this Board, why said defects should not be repaired, and that the road and track aforesaid, from place to place between the points aforesaid, is out of repair and so defective as to render the passage of passenger trains over the same hazardous; that there are now in the track seventy-five thousand ties or sleepers that are broken, rotten, decayed, split, and so defective that the rails cannot be safely secured or fastened thereto, and that there are from place to place on said track an aggregate extent of twenty-five miles of iron rails laminated, broken, worn out, defective, and laid in short pieces, all of which is hazardous for the passage of trains as aforesaid; and thereupon, we, said Railroad Commissioners, do find, determine, and order as follows: That said Corser, and said Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad Company, shall forthwith remove all the ties or sleepers, so called, in said road, between their station at Portland aforesaid and the line of the State in Gilead aforesaid, that have not been placed in said road since the first day of April in the year 1860, intending hereby to require the removal of all the decayed, broken, split, and defective ties or sleepers in said road between the points aforesaid, over which trains as aforesaid are required to pass, and that said Corser and said company, before running passenger trains on said road, repair the road or track aforesaid by laying down sound and sufficient ties or sleepers; and we further determine and order, that before running passenger trains over said road between the points aforesaid, said Corser and said company shall remove all the broken, laminated, worn out, and defective rails on said road, and all pieces of rails less than ten feet in length, and lay and secure to said sleepers, sound rails, and such as will render the transit of passenger trains over said road safe and secure.

And from a careful personal examination of said road by each member of this Board, we are of opinion that the public safety requires the laying on said road of seventy-five thousand new sleepers and twenty-five miles of new iron rails.

[Signed]

G. P. SEWALL, }
A. W. WILDES, } *Railroad*
ALLEN HAINES, } *Commissioners.*

Having in view the vast interests involved, and the certainty that if an injunction should be issued against this road, closing it even for a short season, that the business interests of a large portion of the State, and of the city of Portland, would be subjected to serious and almost irreparable loss and inconvenience, the Commissioners were unwilling to proceed to extreme measures, and knowing that the season was so far advanced that it would be impossible to perfect the required repairs, the Board, after reëxamining the road and finding that some improvement had been made, issued the following order :

OFFICE OF THE RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE STATE OF MAINE, }
Portland, Sept. 30, 1863. }

To the Superintendent of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad :

SIR: The undersigned having examined that portion of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad lying within the limits of said State, and found the road so defective as to render its operations hazardous at high rates of speed, hereby order, that from and after the first day of November next, and until said defects are repaired, the rate of speed on said road, within said limits, be reduced as follows, to wit: For passenger trains to sixteen miles per hour, and for freight trains to ten miles per hour.

[Signed]

A. W. WILDES, } *Railroad Commis-*
ALLEN HAINES, } *sioners for Maine.*

The Commissioners were assured by Mr. Bailey, the local superintendent in place of Mr. Corser, that the above order should be strictly adhered to. The question of the injunction is still pending, and should the necessity arise for issuing it, the Commissioners will not hesitate to do so.

YORK AND CUMBERLAND RAILROAD.

The Commissioners are happy to report, this road improving from year to year, under the judicious management of Mr. Woodbury, one of the trustees, and Mr. Dan Carpenter, Superintendent. Since the last annual examination a large number of new sleepers have been laid in the track, some of the bridges and culverts repaired or rebuilt, some new iron laid, and a portion of the old repaired. Still much remained to be done the past season, and

after making a close examination of the road, the following order was served on the Superintendent, Mr. Carpenter.

To Dan Carpenter, Superintendent of the York and Cumberland Railroad:

You are hereby notified, that at the annual examination of said road, made by me, the undersigned, one of the railroad Commissioners of the State of Maine, on the tenth, eleventh and twelfth days of June current, I find defects therein which, in my opinion, render the passage of trains thereon, hazardous, to wit: defective rails and rotten sleepers, throughout the whole length of said railroad, to the amount, in my opinion, of one and one-half miles of track in rails, and one third of the whole distance in sleepers. Also defective timbers on cattle guards and open culverts. I find the pile bridge, near Portland, defective, and in my opinion, unsafe for the passage of trains thereon. I would suggest that said defects be repaired with as little delay as possible. And for the purpose of allowing said railroad company a reasonable time to make said repairs, the further examination of said railroad will be postponed until the tenth day of August next, at which time the Commissioners will meet at the passenger station of said railroad in Portland, at two o'clock in the afternoon, when the examination of said road will be resumed.

[Signed]

A. W. WILDES,

Railroad Commissioner.

Dated at Portland the 12th day of June, A. D., 1863.

At the time appointed, one of the Commissioners reëxamined the road, and found that every effort was being made to comply with the above-named requirements, and so much had been accomplished, that no hesitancy was felt in giving a certificate of safety.

This road has labored under serious embarrassments for several years past, and much credit is due to the gentlemen now in charge, for its improved condition, and we do not doubt that if the same policy is continued, that it will soon rank with our best roads.

PORTSMOUTH, SACO AND PORTLAND RAILROAD, FROM PORTLAND TO PORTSMOUTH, N. H., 55 MILES.

This road has always ranked as one of the first class roads of our State, which reputation has been well deserved and maintained

under the efficient management of the late Superintendent, Mr. John Russell, Jr. The road bed is well gravelled, and the side ditches in good order. The iron and sleepers were generally good. Many of the bridges and culverts have been rebuilt in a very substantial manner, and the work of rebuilding those considered defective, or likely to become so within a short time, is still progressing.

Among the important requirements of the Commissioners, at the examination of this road, were the following: A new stone abutment at Kennebunk river, a new abutment at Maryland stream, near Wells' depot, new abutments at the stream just east of North Berwick, some new track stringers, caps, and a new draw at the bridge over the Piscataqua river, near Portsmouth, N. H. In addition to the above, some culverts to be rebuilt, and new track timbers on several cattle passes and open culverts, about two hundred tons of new iron and ten thousand sleepers. It is due to Mr. Russell, the Superintendent, to say that he was preparing to make most of these repairs previous to our examination of the road, and since that time all the important repairs have been made. The suggestions of the Commissioners have always been kindly received and promptly adopted by Mr. Russell, and every facility granted to insure a thorough examination, showing conclusively that it is the aim of the managers of this road to maintain a good road, rather than seek to cover up defects. The rolling stock of this road is in excellent repair, as are also the buildings at the different stations on the line, and we have no hesitancy in pronouncing this a first class road.

BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD.

There are only about two miles of this road within the limits of this State. This portion of the road was found in perfect order, requiring no suggestions from the Commissioners, and we can only say, that if the remaining part of the road is in as good repair as this short piece, the public may feel perfectly secure in passing over it. The cars, engines and buildings on this road, are altogether such as a road occupying the position of the Boston and Maine would be expected to maintain, and we endorse it *as a first class road* in every respect.

GREAT FALLS AND SOUTH BERWICK BRANCH.

This road is a continuation of the Great Falls and Conway road, N. H., forming a junction with the Portsmouth, Saco and Portland Railroad at Brock's crossing, so called, about two miles from South Berwick. There are between three and four miles of the road within the limits of this State. This part of the road was found to be in good repair, and is evidently carefully and prudently managed by Mr. A. A. Perkins, the present Superintendent.

PORTLAND AND KENNEBEC RAILROAD FROM AUGUSTA TO PORTLAND
WITH BRANCH FROM BRUNSWICK TO BATH.

After a very thorough examination of this road, which disclosed some serious defects, an order similar to that issued to Mr. Carpenter of the York and Cumberland Road was served on Mr. Cushman, Superintendent of the Portland and Kennebec Railroad, directing him to make certain repairs, of which the following were deemed the most important, viz: Four miles of new iron. Twenty-five thousand new sleepers. Bridge over town road below Richmond needed thorough repair, bridge over Cathance stream, two bridges just north of Bowdoinham station, and bridge over Shingleman's creek and Cathance river, to be rebuilt or fully repaired. The trestle approaches on both ends of the bridge over the Androscoggin river at Brunswick to be rebuilt, and new arches to be put into each span of the last named bridge. On the Bath branch, the following repairs: End approaches to the new meadow's bridge to be rebuilt, also sundry repairs of the bridge over Sewall's stream. In addition to the foregoing, various repairs were ordered of culverts, cattle guards and passes on the whole line of road. The Superintendent, Mr. Cushman, received the suggestions of the Commissioners kindly, and immediately put a force at work to make the necessary repairs; and when last fall the Commissioners reexamined the road, great progress had been made, and the work was still going on. The bridge at Brunswick had been repaired making it stronger than ever before, and the bridge at Cathance river entirely rebuilt, some new iron and sleepers laid, besides various repairs at other points, and we felt that every effort had been, and was being made to put the road in a safe condition for the present winter, and accordingly gave Mr. Cushman a certificate that the road was in our opinion safe in every respect for the passage of trains.

The scarcity of laborers has been a serious embarrassment to the different railroads in our state the past season, and due allowance must be made for this fact in all cases when roads have not been kept up to the usual standard of repairs. This road has never been properly gravelled, and the need of it is very evident, and a matter which should receive the attention of the managers the coming summer, as the durability of the iron and sleepers, as well as the safe and economical working of the road depend in a great measure upon a well gravelled road bed. Occupying as it does one of the most, if not the most important location in our State, it being the natural channel of business from east to west, with two important lines of railroad connecting with and pouring their traffic into its cars, being also one of the great through lines to Portland and Boston with a largely increasing business from year to year, we trust that the present managers will see to it the coming season, that their road is brought up to the position it should occupy, that of a first class railroad.

SOMERSET AND KENNEBEC RAILROAD FROM SKOWHEGAN TO AUGUSTA.

That portion of the above road between Skowhegan and Waterville was found to be generally in good repair. The road bed is well gravelled and ditched—iron not much worn. The sleepers are small and some should be replaced the next season. The bridge across the Kennebec at Skowhegan, and that across Martin's stream in Fairfield are both in capital condition, and good bridges of their class, the culverts are generally good, requiring very little, if any repairs. That portion of the road between Waterville and Augusta is not so good, the iron and sleepers being found defective; also the small bridges. The bridges across the Kennebec at Waterville and Augusta, and the Seabasticook at Winslow were found to be in good condition with the exception of the trestle approaches, and about one hundred feet of the track timbers on the Augusta bridge, the pile and trestle bridges at Drummond Brook, Capen's Gully, Lovejoy's Ferry, Seven Mile Brook and Two Mile Brook, were found to be rotten, also the small temporary bridge between Lang's Mills and Getchell's Corner depot in Vassalboro. Notice in the usual form was served upon Mr. Eaton, to make the requisite repairs, and a sufficient time allowed him to do so. At the second examination of the road although some repairs had been made, yet not to the extent required by the

Commissioners, and we hesitated some time before granting the necessary certificate, but learning that the road was to be leased to responsible parties, and being assured that it was their intention to put it in good condition the coming summer, and believing the repairs made would render it safe for the present, a certificate of present safety was given; since the certificate was issued however, and in the course of the very close examination made by the commissioners with reference to the lease, certain defects were disclosed, which had escaped the notice of the Commissioners in the former examination, of the existence of which Mr. Eaton, the President, and the lessees of the road were immediately notified. This road has always been managed with the most rigid economy as regards repairs, too much so it may be for the good of the road, or the entire safety of the trains passing over it. Under the new management, it is expected that the road will, without unnecessary delay, be thoroughly repaired.

ANDROSCOGGIN RAILROAD, FROM BRUNSWICK TO FARMINGTON, WITH
BRANCH TO LEWISTON.

The faults in the original location of this road are many and cannot be repaired without great expense. The curves are sharp and the grades heavy, and in most instances unnecessarily so, as may be seen by any practical man who has occasion to pass over the line. The alignment and surface of the track is good; upon the road-bed as constructed, the iron and sleepers generally sound, and taken as a whole, the track is as good, or better than that of any other road in the State, with the exception of the roads between Portland and Boston. That portion of the road between Brunswick and Leeds Junction, together with the branch to Lewiston is new and in good repair. The timber in the trestle portion of the bridge at Sabattisville is, in our opinion, too small, and cannot be depended upon the usual length of time that such bridges are expected to last, and it will therefore be necessary to watch it closely, and renew the timber as soon as it begins to show signs of decay. The foundations of the trestles are built of small cobble stones, not suitable for the purpose.

On the older portion of the road, from Leeds Junction to Farmington, the timber in many of the bridges was found defective and rotten, and the following were required to be rebuilt or repaired: Trestle bridge over Norcross brook near Farmington—timber small

and defective; Mineral stream bridge and Lowell stream bridge were required to be rebuilt without delay. Mr. Eaton, the Superintendent, was notified in the usual form to rebuild the above-named bridges, also to repair the bridge over the Wead stream, by removing the track, stringers, caps and bolsters, or corbells. The company were required to lay one mile of new iron and about three thousand sleepers. At the second examination of the road late in the Fall, a portion of the repairs had been made, and the remainder was progressing so satisfactorily that a certificate was issued.

MAINE CENTRAL RAILROAD, FROM BANGOR, *via*. WATERVILLE, TO
DANVILLE JUNCTION.

This road, since it was first opened for travel, has enjoyed a reputation for comfort and safety second to none in New England. Well and thoroughly built originally, it has been the aim of the managers to keep it in good repair, at least that portion between Waterville and Danville Junction. The other section of the road from Waterville to Bangor, was not so thoroughly built, and although constructed several years later, it is not now in so good repair. The Commissioners found but few defects in the western section of the road, and these mostly in the smaller structures, being as follows: Track timbers over Belgrade stream bridge, three small open culverts, and the walls of three cattle passes—track timbers to be renewed, and the walls to be rebuilt. The bridge over the Little Androscoggin at Auburn, and the long bridge over the Adroscoggin at Lewiston had been fully repaired previous to our examination. The other important bridges, one over Winthrop pond, near Readfield, and two over the Emerson stream, near Waterville, were closely examined and found in good condition. The iron and sleepers on this section are generally good. Although it will be necessary to renew a portion of the track the coming summer. From Waterville to West Waterville, and from Auburn to Danville, the track has been relaid in a substantial manner.

On that portion of the road between Waterville and Bangor, the following repairs were directed to be made: Trestle approaches to covered portion of bridge at Kendall's Mills, and new track stringers, caps, post and sills, many of them being rotten and defective; bridge at Pashaw stream, near Pittsfield, one new track stringer; bridge at Etna bog, new caps and stringers, and it was

also recommended that a portion of the bog be filled the coming summer; long pile bridge at Carmel—it was suggested that the bog be filled—embankments have been made the past season; pile bridge next east of Carmel, new caps and stringers; Guptill's bridge, Hermon, new track timbers; Dunning's landing bridge, near Bangor, new track timber. In addition to the above, two culverts to be rebuilt. The iron on this portion of the road was more defective than on the western section. Five hundred tons of iron and about fifteen thousand sleepers are required to put this section of the road in good condition. The above-mentioned repairs, or such as were required to make the road safe for the present winter, have been made. The officers cheerfully acceded to every requirement of the Commissioners, and have always manifested a desire for the most critical examinations, and granted every facility to insure it. This road is well worthy the confidence which the travelling public have always given it.

OXFORD CENTRAL RAILROAD.

This road leaves the Grand Trunk road at Mechanic Falls, running thence to a point about five miles above Buckfield. It has not been used for several years, until last spring, when it was purchased by a company of Boston capitalists, and is being extended to Dixfield, with every prospect of an early completion. The iron on the road is in good condition, never having been much used. Many of the sleepers were rotten and unfit for use. Two of the bridges were found defective, and new track stringers and caps required. The Superintendent was also directed to lay ten thousand new sleepers. The road is used mostly at the present time for conveying materials for the extension, which is being carried on. When the line shall be completed, we have no doubt that it will become a feeder of no little importance to the Grand Trunk Road, and considering the small sum paid for it, by the present owners, highly remunerative to them.

BANGOR AND OLDTOWN RAILROAD.

This road was found to be in good condition, and well managed, requiring no important repairs to insure the safety of trains.

It will be seen by this report, that while the railroads in this State are with one, perhaps two exceptions, in a safe condition for

the service required of them. Still the great increase of travel and freight requires that a large amount of repairs shall be made the coming summer. A railroad where the lives of so many are involved, should keep its bridges, road-bed, track and rolling stock in such state of repair that no doubt of the strength of any portion of the structures to sustain the trains at all times, should be entertained. With all necessary precaution, the liability to accident is very great, and it is important that all our railroad managers should see to it that this liability is reduced to the lowest possible per centage, by maintaining their roads in good repair. When this is not done, the proper authorities should interfere, and the companies be restrained from exposing the lives and property of the public to unnecessary danger.

One fact speaks well for the general management of the railroads in this State, and I think that I am right in the statement, that the life of a passenger has never been sacrificed on any railroad in this State, through the neglect of the managers or employees of the road.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

By your very obedient servant,

[Signed]

A. W. WILDES,

Railroad Commissioner.

Dated at Augusta, Me., this 31st day of December, 1863.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, July 22, 1864.

Reported by Mr. MILLIKEN of Kennebec, from the Committee on Railroad, Ways and Bridges, on whose recommendation the same was laid on the table and 350 copies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

EZRA C. BRETT, *Secretary.*