

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# DOCUMENTS

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# THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1866.



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# FORTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE.

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SENATE.

No. 12.

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## STATE OF MAINE.

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }  
Augusta, January 19, 1866. }

*To the Senate and House of Representatives :*

I have the honor herewith to lay before you for your consideration, the annual report of the Railroad Commissioners for the year last past, made in compliance with section 7, chapter 175 of the public laws of 1860.

SAMUEL CONY.

# REPORT

OF THE

## COMMITTEE ON RAILROADS, WAYS AND BRIDGES.

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The Committee on Railroads, Ways and Bridges, to which was referred the annual report of the Railroad Commissioners of this State, ask leave to be discharged from the further consideration thereof, and recommend that the same be printed for the use of the Legislature.

Per Order.

J. H. WILLIAMS.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
January 26, 1866. }

Read and accepted.

Sent up for concurrence.

F. M. DREW, *Clerk.*

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IN SENATE, January 27, 1866.

Read and concurred.

THOMAS P. CLEAVES, *Secretary.*

# REPORT.

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*To His Excellency the Honorable SAMUEL CONY,  
Governor of the State of Maine:*

The Railroad Commissioners respectfully submit the following Report on the condition of the railroads in this State. During the past season, as in previous years, the present Board of Railroad Commissioners have felt it to be their duty to make a thorough examination of the railroads in this State, and for this purpose one of their number (the Engineer of the Board) has walked the entire length of the different railroads, making minute examination of the bridges, culverts, rails, sleepers, stations, rolling stock, in fact, all portion of the roads affecting in any degree the safety of the trains or the convenience of passengers passing over them. We believe that by pursuing this course, and in this way only, can the objects for which the Board of Railroad Commissioners was constituted be attained, and the safety of the travelling public secured.

The numerous accidents which have occurred upon railroads in different parts of the country during the past year, has awakened a feeling of distrust and insecurity in the public mind which will not, and ought not, to be satisfied with a partial performance of the duties devolving upon those having charge of the management of our railroads, or of the State officers whose duty it is to guard the public interest. The Commissioners have fully appreciated their responsibility, and wherever defects have been discovered they have promptly notified the proper officers of the existence and character of such defects. In most instances this notice has proved sufficient to insure immediate attention, but in some cases it has required constant urging and attention on the part of the Commissioners to insure a proper attention to the directions given or keep certain roads up to the sure limit of safety. Owing to the general good management of the railroads in this State, we have thus far escaped any very serious accidents, and none involving loss of life, which it seems to us is a very remarkable fact, when

we consider the length of time in which our railroads have been operated and the large number of passengers, particularly during the last four or five years, transported over them. While we sincerely hope that the same good fortune may continue in the future, we know that it can be accomplished only by the faithful performance of duty and great care and watchfulness on the part of those having charge of our railroads.

There is a class of accidents against which it is impossible to guard, and to which we are more liable in New England than in other portions of the country, on account of the extreme cold and severe frosts which characterize our winters, and the sudden changes from a comparatively mild atmosphere to that of almost Arctic severity, involving rapid and undue contraction, causing the iron rails, wheels and axles to break at the slightest concussion.

The railroad bridges are necessarily so constructed that it is almost impossible, without the most thorough examination, to discover all the defects of timber, faults of workmanship, or the effect upon each portion of the whole structure which is produced by the immense loads they sustain, and a judgment or opinion as to their safety must be based upon the quality and character of the timber used in construction, the length of time it has been built, protection from the weather, and a close examination of the points at those portions of the bridge which are subjected to the greatest strain, and in cases of doubt by boring into the timber at different points.

The above mentioned course has been pursued by the Commissioners in their examinations, and it will be seen is as rigid as the circumstances will allow. It can hardly be expected that the boring and cutting into these costly structures should be carried to such an extent as to materially injure or affect their strength.

By the terms of the present statute the oversight and responsibility of the Commissioners ceases on the last day of October each year, and continues thus until the first day of the following April. As this is the season when accidents, on account of frost and overloading the bridges, are most likely to occur, we would respectfully suggest that the duties of the Commissioners should be extended throughout the entire year. Certainly no officer should be held responsible for the occurrence of accidents, or for any defect which may develop itself at any time during five months in the year, and over which he can have no control.

The examination of the track is made by passing over the road, generally on foot, carefully inspecting the rails and sleepers, and counting the number of each deemed unfit or unsafe for further use, points where gravel is needed in the culverts, depot buildings and platforms at stations, switches and frogs are also inspected, and the officers of the roads are immediately notified of the results of such investigation. The improvements on the main lines of roads the past season have been marked and permanent in character. A large amount of gravel has been put upon the road-beds, and it is believed that in many respects the railroads are in better condition for winter than ever before. The necessity of a good gravel road-bed has never seemed to be appreciated by our railroad managers, and in some instances has been almost entirely neglected, consequently the cost of operating such roads has been largely increased by reason of the breaking and bending of the iron, and the breaking of sleepers, subjected to unequal pressure and strain on uneven surfaces, caused by the action of frost. The rolling stock is also affected by the same cause, and the constant shock sustained in consequence of uneven and indurated road-beds adds largely to the expense of running such roads, as may be seen by comparing the expenses of operating on a well graveled road-bed and smooth track with that of a clay road-bed and irregular surface. We believe that attention to this simple fact, and applying the remedy, will largely reduce the cost of running the roads by the saving effected in the wear of iron and machinery.

In our Report of last year it was suggested that a change should be made in that portion of the railroad laws of this State which requires railroad companies to erect and maintain road signs at the different road crossings. The present signs in use, as was then stated, are large and unwieldy, uselessly expensive and inconvenient, and in some cases an obstruction; owing to their height and the large surface exposed to the action of the wind, it is difficult to keep them in position. In the early days of railroads in this country, when people were unacquainted with their working and the dangers attendant upon it, the present signs, with the warning painted upon them, "Railroad crossing. Look out for the engine when the bell rings" may have been necessary; but now every one understands the signals, and if in approaching a railroad crossing they hear the whistle sounded or the bell ringing they understand at once that a train is coming and that it is neces-

sary to be on guard, therefore we think that a single post at the side of the road, with an arm upon it, similar to the old fashioned guide board, with the words "Railroad Crossing" distinctly painted thereon, would accomplish the desired object and do away with the objections to the signs now in use. In addition to the above, by a wise provision, as we think, of the law of 1864, the engineers running the trains are obliged to sound the whistle at least one hundred rods from the road the train is about to cross. This of itself is an almost perfect protection against accident.

By the 7th section of the act of the Legislature, approved February 20, 1864, entitled "An act authorizing the further extension of the European and North American Railway," it is provided that in the construction of a bridge across the Kenduskeag stream, the said Railway Company shall conform to such plans and regulations for the building of said bridge, and of two draws, or for a pivot draw, for the passage of vessels through said bridge, and for the future management thereof at the expense of the company, as shall be prescribed by the Board of Railroad Commissioners. In accordance with the above act, and on the petition of Hon. John A. Poor, President of the European & North American Railway Company, the petition and order of notice thereon were published three weeks successively in the Bangor Daily Whig & Courier, that all interested in the matter might appear and be heard.

The Commissioners met at Bangor on the 23d day of August, the Mayor, Hon. Mr. Dale, appearing for the city, and Hon. John A. Poor for the company. After hearing the parties interested, the Commissioners proceeded to examine the proposed location for the bridge. A decision satisfactory to all parties was arrived at, providing for a bridge to be built on the plan of Howe's Truss, with two draws, one on each side of the stream, on the plan of the Ross Draw, similar to those now in use on the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad near Portland; the decision also designates the height of the bridge above high water mark, the style and quality of the piers and abutments, material from which they shall be built, and length of span; it also provides that suitable guiding piers shall be built and kept in such condition, at the expense of the company, that vessels passing through the draws shall not be endangered by reason of the accumulation of ice or from any other cause over which the company may have control. Signals and rules for the management of the draws and bridge are



also established. Copies of this decision are deposited in the clerk's office of the City of Bangor, and with the president of the company.

The building of the European & North American Railway should be a matter of special interest to every citizen of Maine, and when completed it will, in our opinion, be an event in the history of our State second in importance to no other enterprise which has for its object the welfare and development of the vast resources which are hidden in our forests and hills, and which need but the well directed efforts of capital and labor to place us in the front rank as a producing and manufacturing State; penetrating and opening as it would a vast territory, now comparatively unknown, with its valuable lumber and rich soil, waiting only for the axe, the plough, and the means of transportation, to pour out riches equal perhaps to the manufacturing and producing value of the whole State at the present time.

In addition to the advantages above mentioned, the European & North American Railway would be, when completed, the great line of communication between the British Provinces and the United States, and the route of travel from these provinces to their more western neighbors the Canadas. It would also be the route of travel for passengers arriving at Halifax by steamships from Europe, which would not only add largely to the business of the road, but acquaint the emigrant and traveller with the country and induce early settlement.

Much complaint has been made of late, on account of the want of sufficient depot accommodations in Portland, at the point where the three great interior lines of railroads of our State connect with the only line of road leading to Boston. Freight arriving on the Grand Trunk, Portland & Kennebec, and Maine Central railroads, destined for Boston and intermediate points on the line of the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth, Boston & Maine, and Eastern railroads, should not in its transshipment be exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather without proper protection, and as we have but one line of land communication with Boston, it would seem that efforts should be made and every facility granted to make this available to its greatest extent. Such, we doubt not, is the wish of the managers of the last three mentioned roads, and as it is understood that new depot buildings are to be erected the coming summer, we trust that the suggestions above mentioned will receive

their serious consideration, and all cause for further complaint be removed.

In consequence of the high price of iron during the past four years, the different railroad companies have been in the habit of taking out the worn and laminated rails, sending them to their own shops for repair, by welding new iron on the worn and broken portions of the rails. This we believe to be wrong in theory and practice, and very poor economy, as experience proves that the advantages gained do not compensate for the cost of removal, welding and relaying the iron. Rails which have been subjected to this process present a rough and irregular surface, and soon crumble to pieces or break the welded portions. We think it the safer and more economical plan, when the rails have become worn and broken at the ends, to cut them off, when it can be done without reducing the rail to not less than fifteen feet in length. The rails can be cut and returned to the track at a very much less cost than by the other process, the pieces cut off can be sent to the rolling mill together with the rails that have become too much worn for cutting.

Our examinations commenced with the Portland & Kennebec Railroad from Portland to Augusta. The officers of this road may well congratulate themselves upon the success achieved by their energy and perseverance during the past summer, in bringing their road up to its present comparatively good condition. Although many obstacles have interposed, and discouragements met them at almost every step of their advance, yet none of these have been sufficient to retard their progress or turn them aside from their course.

The burning of two large passenger and freight depots at Augusta, (one of them just erected to replace the one previously burned,) together with several passenger and freight cars, the burning of very valuable freight at Gardiner, and the difficulties of obtaining money for purposes of improvement, are a portion of the discouragements and obstacles which have been met and overcome, as will be seen by the following statement of repairs and improvements made since our last report, as follows: New passenger and freight depots and engine house completed at Portland, one and one-half miles of new road built and in use at the present time from Woodford's Corner in Westbrook to a point on the old line near Dow's Tannery in Portland. About forty-two

miles of track has been raised on gravel, and forty-five thousand new sleepers, five hundred tons of new and four hundred tons of cut and repaired iron laid in the track. The bridge at Sewall's Mills, 160 feet in length, on the Bath branch, has been rebuilt. Cathance Bridge, between Topsham and Bowdoinham, covered with iron, at Shingleman's Creek the old wooden bridge has been taken away and a large double culvert built, and the embankment partially made on it, a short bridge near the old steam mill in Bowdoinham has been removed and the space filled in with earth and rock. Several new culverts and cattle passes have been built and new timbers put upon those requiring them, track and floor timbers have been put upon several of the smaller bridges, a new depot built at Augusta, since burned, engine house at Gardiner, blacksmith's shop at Brunswick, one thousand feet of wood-shed, at different points on the line, and repairs of depot at Bath, four new Monitor passenger cars, two smoking cars remodelled from old passenger cars, two new mail cars, and general refitting and repairing of all the passenger cars and some of the engines on the road, complete the list of improvements during the year.

The Somerset & Kennebec Railroad, leased by the Portland & Kennebec Company, and under the same management, has not been neglected. The bridge crossing the Kennebec river at Augusta has been thoroughly repaired and covered with iron. The bridge crossing the river at Waterville has been repaired and strengthened with additional timbers, and one of the piers with additional stone work. A bridge has been built at Martin's stream in Fairfield, bridge at Sknowhegan repaired and covered with iron, a new freight depot and platform built at Kendall's Mills, track timbers have been put upon several of the open culverts and cattle passes, about ten thousand sleepers and thirty tons of new iron have been put into the track, and twelve miles of track raised and gravelled. The above mentioned repairs were commenced and carried on until August under the supervision of Edwin Noyes, Esq., the present able superintendent of the Maine Central Railroad; since that time the president of the road, the Hon. R. D. Rice, has managed its affairs with good success. The officers of this road are entitled to great commendation for the energy and zeal displayed in the management of its affairs, and we can but express the hope that their efforts may be rewarded by remunerative success.

Persons in the habit of travelling on the Grand Trunk Railway from year to year cannot have failed to notice the great improvement made on that road the past season when compared with the preceding years. We believe that the officers of this road have been sincere in their expressed desire to put their road in good condition, and have made great efforts to accomplish such results. In our annual examination of the road, it was found that about twenty-four miles of iron and forty thousand sleepers would be required on that portion of the road within the limits of this State. About one-half the amount of iron and a large portion of the sleepers have been laid in the track during the past summer. Many of the track timbers over the cattle passes and culverts were found to be rotten, and have been replaced with new timber. A new and substantial bridge has been built on Royal River in North Yarmouth, and a heavy retaining wall, at Pickett's Hill in Bethel. Several culverts have been rebuilt at different points on the line. Owing to the immense freight traffic on this line of road, the iron is subjected to unusual wear, requiring constant renewing, and great watchfulness and care on the part of those who are intrusted with the oversight of the track.

Mr. Murphy, the present efficient superintendent of track, has proved himself abundantly competent to fulfil the duties of his position. Under his management the track has been greatly improved, and we doubt not that if he is retained in his present position, and the material furnished him for doing so, he will make the track of the Grand Trunk equal to that of any other railroad in the country. Gravel is needed on a considerable portion of the track, and as large beds of the material are found in convenient localities at different points on the line, we trust that the company will avail themselves of its benefits. A large amount of good substantial fence has been built the past summer, and the bushes cut down and removed from within the fence limits nearly the whole length of the line in this State. A new depot building has been erected at Bethel, in place of one destroyed by fire, and platforms rebuilt or repaired at the different stations. A new and commodious depot building has been erected at Danville Junction, and we hope that the coming summer a similar improvement will be made at Yarmouth Junction. The Grand Trunk Railway being the great line of communication between the extremes east and west, all classes of our citizens should feel a deep interest in its

welfare and prosperity. Our State has already been largely benefited by its construction, and the beautiful city of Portland is rapidly increasing in wealth and commercial importance through the influence of the great traffic brought to her doors over this line of road, and we believe that a liberal and just policy in all our dealings with this great enterprise will secure results in the future far exceeding in value the experiences of the past.

The Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad, under the good management of the efficient superintendent, Francis Chase, Esq., maintains its reputation as a good and safe road. The track and bridges, with one exception, are in good condition, requiring but slight repairs, and these for the most part confined to the open culverts and cattle guards. The stone arch at Mousam River, Kennebunk, will need some alterations and repairs the coming summer, but to what extent cannot be fully determined until the work is commenced. The bridge over the Piscataqua River at Portsmouth, so far as can be seen, is in good order. No pains or expense is spared by the company to insure the safe passage of the trains over this bridge. A party of bridge carpenters are stationed there whose only duty it is to make the necessary repairs and keep the bridge in safe condition. It is understood that a new depot will be built at the terminus of this road in Portland the coming summer; this improvement has been long needed, and is necessary not only for the convenience of this road, but all the important lines of railroads connected with and doing business over it.

It has been suggested that the running of a dummy car over that portion of this road between Portland, Saco and Biddeford would be highly beneficial to the business interests of these communities and remunerative to the railroad company. We believe that the large and increased business between the above named points demand increased facilities for its transaction, and while we disclaim any desire to dictate or interfere with the management of the road, we would suggest that an experiment costing so small a sum and of so much importance to the public is well worthy a fair trial.

Boston & Maine Railroad. The well-known ability and care which has always distinguished the management of this road and made it a favorite route of travel still characterizes it, and the public may rest assured that under the superintendence of Mr. Merritt their interests and safety will be carefully guarded.

At our examination of this road, some suggestions were made by us in regard to repairs the coming summer, though not of sufficient importance to be stated in detail in this report.

The Great Falls Branch Railroad connects with the Portland, Saco & Portsmouth Railroad at a point in South Berwick called Brock's crossing. There are but three miles of this road within the limits of this State. The track was found in fair condition, showing some improvement since our last examination. Several hundred new sleepers have been laid in the track, and the bridge over the river at South Berwick fully repaired, covered and protected from the weather. It is proposed to extend this road to Conway, New Hampshire, the accomplishment of which will greatly add to its business and importance. The road is carefully and economically managed by A. A. Perkins, Esq.

York & Cumberland Railroad. It cannot be said that this road is in good condition, particularly that part of it between Portland and Morrill's Corner in Westbrook, the iron being broken and worn to such an extent as to require great care and a low rate of speed in running trains over it. From Westbrook to Saco River the track is better, although a portion of the iron is badly worn and many sleepers unsound. A sufficient number of sleepers have been laid to insure the safety of the trains the present winter, but many more will be required the coming summer. A considerable amount of iron will also be required. The bridge over Deering Mill Pond in Portland and Westbrook should be rebuilt. The bridge was originally built of small timber, and badly constructed, and has only been kept in a passable condition by constant and expensive repairs and by the exercise of great care and caution. The other bridges and culverts along the line are generally in good condition. This road has lately passed from the ownership of the York & Cumberland Railroad Company to that of the Portland & Rochester Railroad Company, and is now known by that title. It is proposed by the new organization to extend to some point further west, and form a connection with one of the Boston roads. This enterprise, so important to the interests of Portland, should not be allowed to fail for want of encouragement or the necessary means to complete the road.

The Portland & Oxford Central Railroad is a short road, leaving the Grand Trunk Railway at Mechanic's Falls, and running thence to Minot, Buckfield and Sumner. The iron was found to be in

good condition, not much worn. A large number of new sleepers have been laid in the track and some slight repairs made on the bridges since our last examination in 1864. The Commissioners required additional repairs the past season, sufficient, we think, with proper care in running, to insure the safety of the trains during the present winter. The bridges on this road are badly constructed, and have been heretofore very much neglected by those having charge of the road. The road having lately passed into the hands of gentlemen who express a determination to put it in good repair, the Commissioners have thought best to allow them the opportunity for doing so before proceeding to extreme measures, believing from the assurances given by those interested in the road that the public interests will not suffer by the delay.

Androscoggin Railroad, Brunswick to Farmington. The track of this road is generally in a good state of repair, though at least one mile of new iron and several thousand sleepers will be required the coming summer. The bridge at Farmington has received needed repairs, also that at East Wilton. A substantial abutment and retaining wall has been built, at large expense, at the bleachery bridge near Lewiston. Much, however, remains to be done to the different bridges along the line, and we think it will be for the interest of the company that these repairs should be commenced early in the season, in order that they may have sufficient time during the warm weather to complete the work. During one of the severe storms last spring, the embankment on the shore of Sabattis Pond was nearly all destroyed by the action of the water. This has been refilled the past season, and sheet piling driven along the shore of the pond to prevent the recurrence of the wash. New track timbers have been laid on most of the open culverts, cattle passes and waterways. A small amount of gravel has been put upon the road-bed, but more is needed, particularly upon that part of the road between Leeds Junction and Farmington. The depot buildings and platforms on the old portion of the road need extensive repairs, and in some cases can hardly be called either safe or convenient for passengers arriving at or departing from these points. We know that this company has labored under some disadvantages, and these, together with the high prices of labor and material, have delayed the necessary improvements and repairs, but it is hoped that these obstacles will not be allowed in the future to interfere with or obstruct the pro-

gress of improvement on this road. S. W. Eaton, Esq., is the superintendent.

Bangor & Oldtown Railroad was found in safe running order. The iron is somewhat worn, and one mile of new iron will be required next spring. A large number of sleepers have been laid in the track this year, and more are needed. The bridge over the Penobscot River at Stillwater has been fully repaired and strengthened, in accordance with the directions given by the Commissioners last year. Some other repairs of minor importance have been made, and one new passenger car and a smoking car have been added to the rolling stock. The gentleman under whose immediate supervision the road is operated is experienced in railroad management, and conducts its affairs in a faithful and satisfactory manner.

Maine Central Railroad. Danville Junction to Bangor. At the examination of this road last spring, it was found that several miles of iron and a large number of sleepers would be required to keep the track up to the usual good running order which has characterized it for so many years. This want has in a great measure been supplied. Five hundred tons of new iron, two thousand repaired rails, thirty-six thousand sleepers have been laid in the track the past summer and fall. Fifteen miles of track have been raised on gravel from six to ten inches. The bridge over the Androscoggin River at Lewiston, extensively repaired last year, has been still more improved this year. The bridge over Winthrop Pond in Readfield has been thoroughly repaired. The bridge over the Kennebec River at Kendall's Mills, that over the Sebasticook at Pittsfield, a small bridge over Harville's stream in Carmel, and one near Herman Centre have all received necessary repairs. Several culverts and cattle passes have been rebuilt or repaired, and wherever necessary new track timbers supplied. The well known ability of the superintendent of this road, Edwin Noyes, Esq., and the care displayed in its management, the remarkable freedom from accident, and regularity of trains in arrival and departure, has earned for this line reputation for safety and reliability second to that of no other road in the country. Arrangements are now being made to refit and remodel the passenger cars and build new ones at the company's shop in Waterville. The rolling stock is well kept up, and such additions made from time to time as the increasing business of the line requires.



The plan adopted by our railroad companies, of running their trains at low rates of speed during the winter months, we believe to be both wise and economical, and we have no doubt that the result will show a great saving in wear of track and machinery, largely reducing the running expenses of the roads.

From the foregoing statements, it will be seen that the main lines of railroads through our State have been much improved since our last report, and should the same liberal system of expenditure be continued, and the necessity of a well gravelled and permanent road-bed fully appreciated and acted upon, we shall soon have no reason to fear that the railroads of Maine will not compare favorably with those of other States.

Respectfully submitted by

A. W. WILDES,

*For the Board of Railroad Commissioners for Maine.*

Skowhegan, Maine, December 30, 1865.