

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1867.

AUGUSTA:
STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.
1867.

FORTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 71.

By a joint order of the Legislature of January 21st, the Committee on Education was authorized to visit the State Normal School at Farmington, examine into the condition of the same, and report thereon. In pursuance of this order, a part of the Committee have visited the school, and submit the following

REPORT AND RESOLVE.

One cannot well visit the Normal School at Farmington and witness its daily exercises without being most favorably impressed in regard to its importance. The winter term is not, however, the most suitable time to obtain a correct idea of the school, as a large portion of the students is usually absent engaged in teaching. The Committee were received with the utmost cordiality by teachers and pupils, and every possible facility was granted them to obtain a correct knowledge of the condition and wants of the school. The entire day was spent in witnessing the exercises which constitute the ordinary routine of each day, and in the evening a favorable opportunity was afforded to form a personal acquaintance with teachers and students in the Normal School hall, where all assembled to receive the Committee, and give them any information they might desire respecting the school. By this means the Committee gained much intelligence, and learned the state of feeling of the young people connected with the school. It may be well here to remark that the students are of the best class of youth in the State, and are really ladies and gentlemen in intelligence and deportment.

The attendance during the winter has been much larger than in corresponding terms of past years, numbering about seventy-eight, and when we consider for how short a period the school has been in operation, we cannot but express our gratification at the degree of excellence it has attained. This we feel assured has been accomplished by the unwearied and persistent efforts of ardent friends and efficient teachers.

During the day ample opportunity was granted the Committee to witness the various exercises of the school, consisting of recitations in Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, English Grammar and Analysis, English Literature, Map Drawing, Composition and Declamation, in all of which both teachers and students acquitted themselves with great honor. Judging from what we saw and heard, we feel justified in saying that teachers and taught are accomplishing all that can reasonably be expected of them, and although the school may not have attained to that high degree of excellence we anticipate for it, still it compares most favorably with older institutions of the kind.

Of the teachers we would say "they are the right persons in the right place." They labor harmoniously together, and for their pupils manifest a strong attachment, which is ardently reciprocated by the latter.

In regard to the instruction, we do not hesitate to assert that its chief excellence is *thoroughness*. No student can go through the prescribed course in this school without having obtained a very high degree of mental discipline.

The school at Farmington is still in its infancy, and demands the fostering care of the State. There, are gathered young people from almost every county in the State, who are to exert an influence as teachers in every nook and corner of the State, which gives the normal schools a power hardly excelled by any other class of institutions of learning. These schools are emphatically the offspring of the State, the property of the people, and the people will demand that they be most carefully cherished and amply sustained.

In regard to the wants of the Farmington school, we would refer the Legislature to the very able and complete report of the Principal, G. M. Gage, Esq., made to the State Superintendent of Common Schools, and included in the annual report of the latter.

It is very desirable that all the property pertaining to this school and held by the Trustees of the Farmington Academy should be secured to the State, and the welfare of the school demands some improvements in the old building attached to the rear of the new brick structure. We ask for the above named report a careful and candid consideration.

If the "Dirigo" State is not to fall behind other States in matters of enterprise and improvement, then she must look well to the education of her youth. She must sustain every practical measure for the elevation of her common school system. Let no mean or stunted policy characterize her action in this regard. If we would

retain our young men and young women at home, we must provide for their education, and find employment for them within our own borders. Whatever appropriations may be withheld, let us not fail to give permanence to our normal schools by liberal and judicious appropriations for their benefit. Let this work be accomplished at once; and having secured the very best teachers, let them receive a compensation commensurate with the duties required of them, and equal to what other States pay; we may then dismiss our anxiety for the results.

Much more might be added in regard to the excellences of the school at Farmington; but the Committee feel that it is unnecessary to repeat what other visitors in past years have so urgently and wisely said. We commend their words, and refer to their reports to corroborate our statements. We have but feebly expressed what most deeply interests us in regard to the Normal School at Farmington.

In conclusion, the Committee would add that they have full confidence in the utility and success of our normal schools, devoted especially, as they are, to the preparation of teachers for the public schools of the State. In no way, in the opinion of the Committee, is money so unwisely expended as in the employment of incompetent teachers in our schools, and there can be no good reason why such persons as are inclined to devote a portion of their time to teaching should not be furnished with schools especially designed to prepare them for this calling.

It is not expected that we shall ever arrive at a point beyond which there can be no improvement, but our progress must ever be upward and onward, and "Dirigo" should *always* be our motto, in every enterprise by which the people shall be made better and the interests of the State promoted. We are fully aware that the State is heavily burdened with debt and the utmost economy must be exercised in the administration of our affairs, but a mean and stinted policy will not aid in paying our debts, but tend rather to depopulate the State and make our burdens heavier.

C. BICKFORD.
JONAS GREENE.
GEORGE W. BLANCHARD.
E. G. WAGG.
JAMES M. HUTCHINSON.
S. A. FISH.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE additional to a resolve approved February twenty-third, eighteen hundred sixty-six, in aid of the state normal school at Farmington.

Resolved, That the sum of one thousand two hundred 2 dollars, in addition to three thousand two hundred 3 dollars appropriated in aid of the state normal school 4 at Farmington, by a resolve approved February twenty- 5 third, eighteen hundred sixty-six, be and the same is 6 hereby appropriated from the treasury for the purposes, 7 and to be expended in the manner provided in said 8 resolve of February twenty-third, eighteen hundred 9 sixty-six.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 14, 1867. }

Reported by Mr. BICKFORD, from the Committee on Education, and on motion of Mr. WOODMAN of Bucksport, ordered to be printed, with resolve accompanying.

FRANKLIN M. DREW, *Clerk.*