

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

DOCUMENTS

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1867.

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

FORTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 24.

STATE OF MAINE.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT, }
Augusta, February 4, 1867. }

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

I herewith transmit a copy of the notes on the survey of the Penobscot river by the Engineer Department of the United States, which I have procured in advance of the publication of the report through the courtesy of Colonel George Thom, corps of engineers.

The reports and maps relating to the improvement of the Kennebec river are expected, by a similar favor, before the close of the present session.

J. L. CHAMBERLAIN.

Notes on the Penobscot River, Maine, by B. S. Alexander, Major of Engineers, Bvt. Brig. Gen. U. S. A., made on the 3d and 4th of September, 1866.

The object of the examination of this river between Bangor and Winterport was to ascertain the nature of the obstructions to navigation, and their causes, with a view to the improvement of the river, and to enable me to give intelligent instructions in reference to the survey of the river between Hampden and Bangor, as authorized by recent act of Congress.

The obstructions are of two kinds :

1st, rocks.

2d, bars which are forming across the river.

The rocks are in the channel of the river and abreast of the city of Bangor. There is one very dangerous rock, called "Independence Rock," in mid-channel, opposite to the city, which all the commercial men are very anxious to have removed. It is only with great care that vessels can swing past it, and even with all the precautions which can be taken, they sometimes ground upon it at low water. The rock is represented to be quite small, being only a few feet broad at its highest point. As the tide rises and falls here some eighteen feet, I have no doubt but that the top of this rock may be easily blasted off at high water, and the fragments afterwards taken up and removed from the river if necessary. This is the only one of the rocks that is believed to be *in situ*. The others, of which there are several in the river, abreast of the city, are much smaller, and are supposed to be boulders which have been brought down by the ice and deposited. All such rocks could be easily removed by a sloop properly rigged for the purpose, and a man in armor to go down and make fast to them.

But the subject of the greatest anxiety to the commercial men of Bangor, is the yearly growth of the bars which are forming across the river, narrowing the channel, and thereby rendering the navigation difficult, and threatening in time, unless arrested, to close the channel altogether for the larger class of vessels.

There are three of these bars, going down the river. The first is just below the city of Bangor. The second is at Hampden. The third is at Winterport. These bars are formed by slabs, edgings

and sawdust, which arrest the sediment carried down by the river, and cause its deposit. These come down the river from the saw mills above Bangor, from Oldtown, and above, which meeting the flood tide, are checked in their course, collected in great masses in the eddies of the river, and finally sunk, presenting, where they can be seen, at low water, a tangled mass of this material, which will be difficult to remove.

It may be observed that the saw-mills at Bangor do not injure the river. There is a market there for all their slabs and edgings for firewood, and the sawdust is shipped for packing ice, or other purposes.

Such is not the case however above tide water, where water power is used for driving the mills, and where there is no market for firewood and no facilities for shipping the sawdust.

Before the General Government undertakes to remove these bars, some State legislation will be needed on the subject. A State law preventing the owners of saw-mills and lumber-yards from throwing their slabs, edgings and sawdust into the river, with proper penalties attached to its violation, and a Commissioner or Commissioners to see that it is enforced, would seem to be necessary. So long as the cause of the formation of these bars is in active operation, it would seem to be useless for the government to undertake their removal. Unless this, or some other effective remedy is applied, the river will, in time, be liable to serious injury, and the city of Bangor, instead of being the greatest lumber market in the country, may, some day, wake up to the fact that she is an interior town.

In conclusion, I recommend, for the reasons which were stated in my notes on the Kennebec river, that the survey of the Penobscot river, "above Hampden," to Bangor, be turned over to the Coast Survey, and, if the appropriation will justify the expenditure, that I receive orders to remove "Independence Rock." From what I could learn of this rock I am of opinion that it could be removed for about two thousand dollars; though, if we undertake it, being still in some little uncertainty as to its exact form and size, it might be safer to set aside a larger sum, say three thousand dollars for that purpose.

(Signed)

B. S. ALEXANDER,

Bvt. Brig. Gen. U. S. A.

U. S. ENGINEER OFFICE, }
 Portland, Maine, September 21, 1866. }

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 4, 1867.

Read, and on motion of Mr. PORTER, laid on the table, and the usual number of copies ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

THOMAS P. CLEAVES, *Secretary.*