

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1867.

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1867.

FORTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 63.

The Committee on Military Affairs, as required by section 85 of chapter 307 of the public laws of 1865, visited and inspected the Arsenal and State property at Bangor, January 17th, and the Arsenal and military stores at Portland, January 28th.

At Bangor Arsenal we found a quantity of equipments, camp and garrison equipage, soldiers' overcoats, and various kinds of small arms. Most of these articles are worn by use, and some of old patterns; still there is a considerable amount that is valuable, among which we would especially mention a quantity of new infantry equipments and a lot of cavalry sabres.

Two brass field pieces now there are of little value. They were originally smooth bores, as all brass guns should be, and were intended to carry a light round shot, or grape or cannister. But the rifling process to which they have been submitted has not only somewhat weakened the gun itself, but the rifled shot adapted to such a calibre as these guns are of, is so much heavier than the round shot, and the service charge of powder required, also, so much increased thereby, that these guns would doubtless, by the increased strain thus caused upon them, if we should attempt to use them, prove much more dangerous to our own gunners than to the enemy. The same is also true of the four originally fine brass pieces in the arsenal at Portland. They are in their present condition, so vastly inferior to brass Napoleons, iron Parrotts, or the "ordnance gun," that they may now be considered almost valueless for any practical purpose of public defence. New guns of either of the improved patterns for light artillery, might be mounted on the carriages now used for these guns, and the caissons made serviceable.

The arsenal buildings at both places appear to be in good condition.

The military stores at Bangor are kept in a fair condition.

At Portland arsenal are a few hundred good Enfield rifles in fair condition, and a considerable quantity of various arms, most of which have been more or less used, and a portion of which are not very well taken care of. They ought to be kept in better condition, and should at least be kept cleaner. Several old London Tower muskets, which are trophies, are in good condition. We recommend that especial care be taken to preserve them.

Some fifteen hundred pounds of musket and cannon powder, and a very limited number of ball cartridges are stored in the powder house. The interest of the State would seem to require that a larger quantity of ball cartridges be kept on hand, ready for any emergency that may arise.

A portion of the military property of the State appears to be scattered into various localities, some of it into irresponsible hands, where it must have received much damage and been rendered unavailable for any useful purpose, unless collected and repaired. The parties to whom this property has been issued have not always been required to make proper returns of its condition, nor have they been held strictly accountable for its safety, and it has not been properly inspected in behalf of the State. The absence of any good system of inspection in our militia has been injurious to the interest of the State. No good militia or other troops can be expected to be had without adequate inspection, nor can it be supposed that the military property of the State can be properly taken care of, without it. Some of that portion of the military property, now otherwise unserviceable, may be altered or repaired so as to answer for some purposes of drill and instruction, and perhaps save the State from considerable expense in purchasing new ones.

Much of the military property now scattered ought to be again collected into the arsenals, and kept properly repaired, and in serviceable condition.

Good uniform arms, of the very best pattern, and equipments, and camp and garrison equipage sufficient to arm and equip two or three regiments, ought to be had and kept constantly on hand in store, and not to be issued or used for any purpose except for active service.

We recommend that the Governor be authorized and requested to procure, from the General Government or elsewhere, three bat-

teries of light artillery, of six guns each, and two thousand of the very best repeating rifles, (breech loaders,) and that a portion of them be kept in store until wanted for active service.

These rifles being the most efficient arms now in use, a force of infantry armed with them ought to be much more efficient than an equal force armed in the usual manner.

As Maine is a frontier State, and liable to be suddenly called upon to defend her territory from invasion, there is an obvious propriety in her possessing some of these superior weapons, and it is to be hoped that the General Government will, for these reasons, be liberal towards the State by furnishing or aiding to procure these arms.

Per order.

H. BOYNTON, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE relating to state arms.

Resolved, That the governor be authorized and in-
2 structed to obtain from the general government or
3 elsewhere, three batteries of light artillery of six guns
4 each, and two thousand of the best pattern of breech
5 loading rifle muskets.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 15, 1867.

On motion of Mr. BOYNTON laid on the table and ordered to
be printed, together with resolve accompanying.

THOMAS P. CLEAVES, *Secretary.*