

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Public Documents of Maine:

BEING THE

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF VARIOUS

PUBLIC OFFICERS AND INSTITUTIONS

FOR THE YEARS

1870-71.



AUGUSTA:

SPRAGUE, OWEN & NASH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1871.

REPORTS

OF THE

BOARD AND COMMISSIONER

OF

IMMIGRATION.

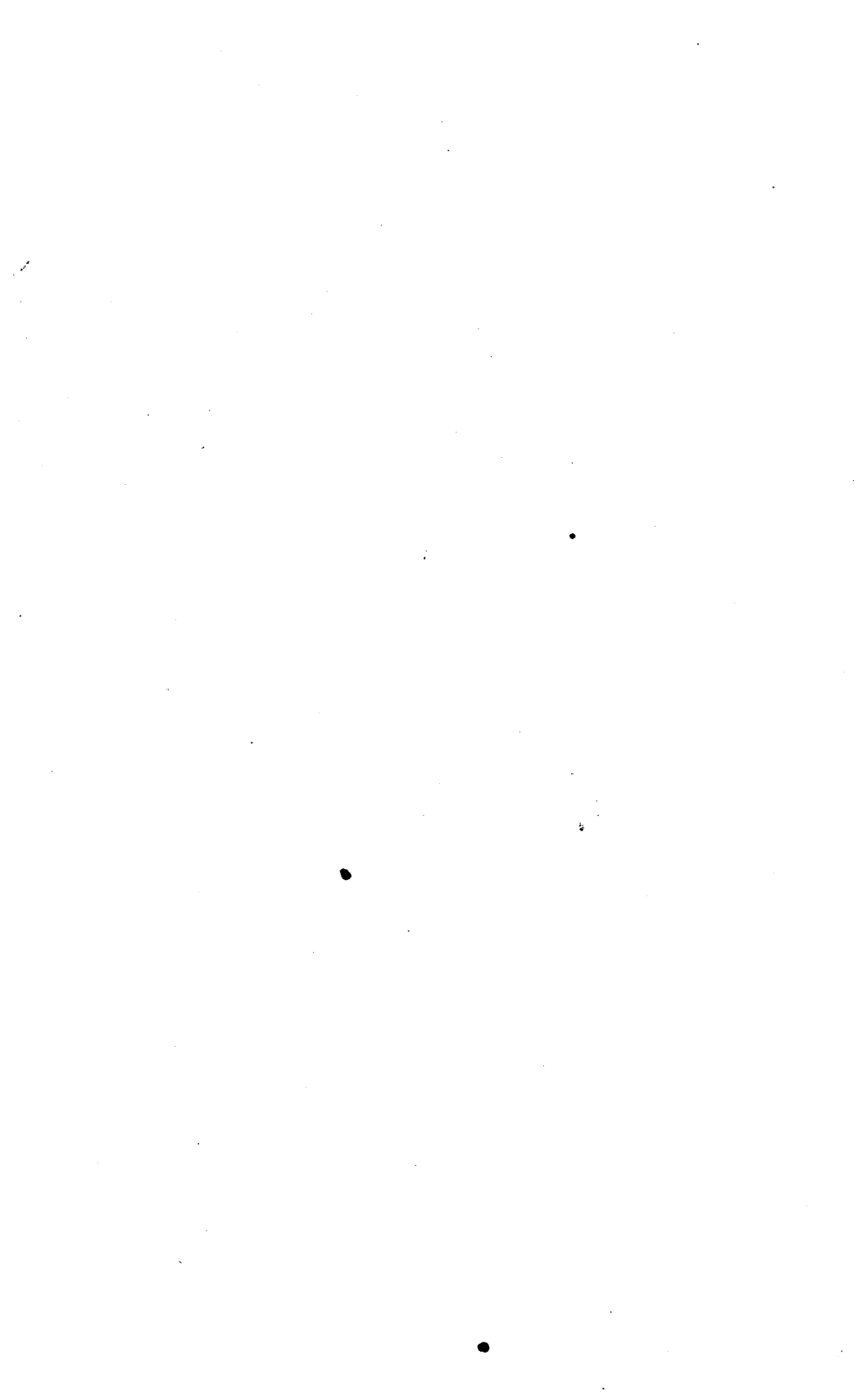
1870.



AUGUSTA:

SPRAGUE, OWEN & NASH, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

1871.



REPORT OF THE BOARD OF IMMIGRATION.

To the Honorable, the Senate and House of Representatives :

The Board constituted by the Legislature of 1870 to promote immigration to the settlements of the Public Lands, deem the action entrusted to them of so much importance in its nature, its present stage, and its foreseen results, that they beg leave to present a brief report, which may serve not only to lay the proper information before the legislature, but to give an outline, yet an accurate account, of the whole undertaking.

It is well known, that at various times hitherto, the subject of inducing immigration from the north of Europe into Maine, has received the attention of those who are interested in her public policy and welfare.

No measures, however, were entered on in any manner that even promised success. The few efforts that were made on a private scale, failed for want of the prudence necessary in selecting or establishing colonists; and with each new agitation and abandonment the end seemed the farther from being accomplished.

What was now to be done had not even the advantage of open ground, but must be carried against the force of previous experiment, and the prejudice of previous reaction.

The movement which has now resulted in the establishment of a colony of Swedes in Maine, originated in a course of interviews and correspondence in the year 1867 with gentlemen in the Western States who were familiar with every aspect of immigration, and whose patriotism was broad enough to embrace the interests of other sections than those which contributed to their private advantage. A grateful recollection would prompt especial acknowledgements—were not the permission of mentioning names withheld—to one gentleman who on a visit to this State was struck by

the remarkable advantages which might be afforded here to the best class of colonists, and entered with much interest into the project of a Swedish colony in Maine.

So convincing were the facts and arguments drawn out by this conference, that in the address of the governor to the legislature in 1868, the subject of Swedish immigration was broached with emphasis and yet with caution; the object not being so much at that time to urge immediate action, as to stimulate thought and discussion.

As might be expected, the ideas now propounded met with little more than tolerance, as motions which claimed respect only from the position of the mover and not from the merits of the matter.

The idea, however, took some hold upon our people, and in the address of 1869, the bolder step was taken of advising the legislature to appoint a committee to investigate the subject, and report a feasible plan of operations.

This recommendation received the favor of the intelligent legislature of that year.

The committee was appointed. Happily at this juncture, the opportune return of William W. Thomas, Jr., from an official residence in Sweden, brought to the friends of Scandinavian immigration an able ally. Thus the legislative committee were furnished with extraordinary facilities for ascertaining the elements of the question on the Scandinavian side. This committee rendered valuable service and their part in the matter should not be forgotten. They unanimously reported in favor of the enterprise, and the result was, that at the close of the session of 1869, a resolve was passed authorizing the appointment of a commission to examine the subject, and recommend practical measures for settling our public lands.

The gentlemen appointed on this commission—the Hon. P. P. Burleigh, W. W. Thomas, Jr., and William Small—fulfilled their mission with great ability, and their report at the close of the year is an interesting part of the history of immigration in Maine.

In noticing the report of this Commission, the recommendations of previous years were repeated in 1870. The most sanguine friends of the enterprise rallied to its support; and at the close of the session, the legislature having intelligently weighed the matter, passed an act, providing with equal generosity and prudence for the establishment of a Colony of Scandinavians on the soil of Maine.

By this Act the Governor, the Secretary of State, and the Land Agent, were constituted a Board of Immigration. They were authorized to appoint an agent to recruit the colony abroad, and superintend its establishment, and were fortunate in retaining the valuable and indispensable services of Mr. Thomas. The Board met immediately, selected the township in their opinion most favorable for the success of the undertaking, and made those preliminary dispositions of the work which fell to their share. Mr. Thomas proceeded immediately to his duties.

In order to insure the complete success of the undertaking, it was deemed necessary that something more should be done here than collect statistics, prepare maps and circulars, and render aid and comfort to our commissioner abroad; we must make material preparations for the arrival of the colony, by providing for them a home, and some means of sustenance.

These great responsibilities and labors fell upon the land agent, Hon. P. P. Burleigh; and here it may be permitted the chairman of this board to say that the steadfast energy, zeal and discretion of Mr. Burleigh from first to last were vital to the enterprise. The township selected was No. 15, Range 3, west from the east line of the State, lying on the Little Madawaska river, and distant about eight miles from Caribou village in the town of Lyndon. It was covered by an unbroken forest. A survey had been made, roads laid out and lots located. The trees on five acres of each lot were now felled and burned, and a neat log-house eighteen by twenty-six feet in size erected on each lot, to the number of twenty-five in all. A cook-stove and some necessary provisions were also furnished for each; all, however, upon the strictest principles of economy, and with an eye to the appropriation made by the State.

All was ready. The two elements that had been maturing—two oceans asunder—were now brought together and the experiment would fairly begin. This was done. The least that can be said is, that the intentions of the law were carried out with spirit. The act was passed on the 23d of March, and on the 23d of July the Swedish colony entered their homes in the wilderness. The day and the event, we believe, will be remembered in Maine.

The strangers were welcomed to their new home with the generous hospitality which characterizes the people of Aroostook, and everything was done by the proper authorities consistent with the

provisions of the law, to make this new home agreeable and permanent. The colony consisted of fifty individuals, all of them fitted to make good and reliable citizens. Additions have since been made from Sweden, and of others, of the same nationality, from other places, to the number of one hundred and fourteen, and more are now on the way. All have gone to work at their various trades with a skill and determination that augur sure success to the enterprise. Additional acres have been cleared on almost every lot, and winter grain sown. A commodious building has been erected on State land, reserved for the purpose, at a convenient place for the accommodation of the people, as a public storehouse on the lower story, and for school-room and hall for public meetings in the upper story.

A noteworthy feature of this colony is, that they have paid their own expenses hither. All seem contented and happy. They are intelligent and educated, and will become a valuable element in our population. The fame of "New Sweden" has gone abroad on both sides of the Atlantic. Very many inquiries from all quarters are constantly coming in, which are likely to end in large and increasing additions to the colony.

It will be seen that some expenses were necessarily incurred by the Land Agent outside of any specific appropriations. These should be made up to him.

In order to the complete success of the enterprise which the State has thus begun to foster, something more is yet to be done. The colonists have but small means, and having come too late to secure a harvest the last year, some aid is necessary in order to their support until a living can be earned by them in their new home. It is a matter of the utmost importance that the State should make an appropriation sufficient to furnish seed for the colonists in the ensuing spring. Provision should also be made for locating and "bushing out" roads, and establishing lots so as to front upon them, and to meet any contingencies which may attend this early period of the colony. The enterprise is too far advanced, and too promising of good, to be allowed to languish or stand still. Successful beyond our hopes, it has now assumed an importance which justifies the most liberal policy on the part of the State, to support and foster it. Well sustained and properly managed, there is no doubt that this little colony will prove the forerunner of a most valuable immigration, and the speedy settlement of our great wilderness domain.

We commend to the attention of the Legislature the interesting Report of Mr. Thomas submitted herewith, and would here express our obligations to him for the energy and discretion with which he has conducted one of the most important achievements in the history of Maine.

JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN,

For the Board of Immigration.



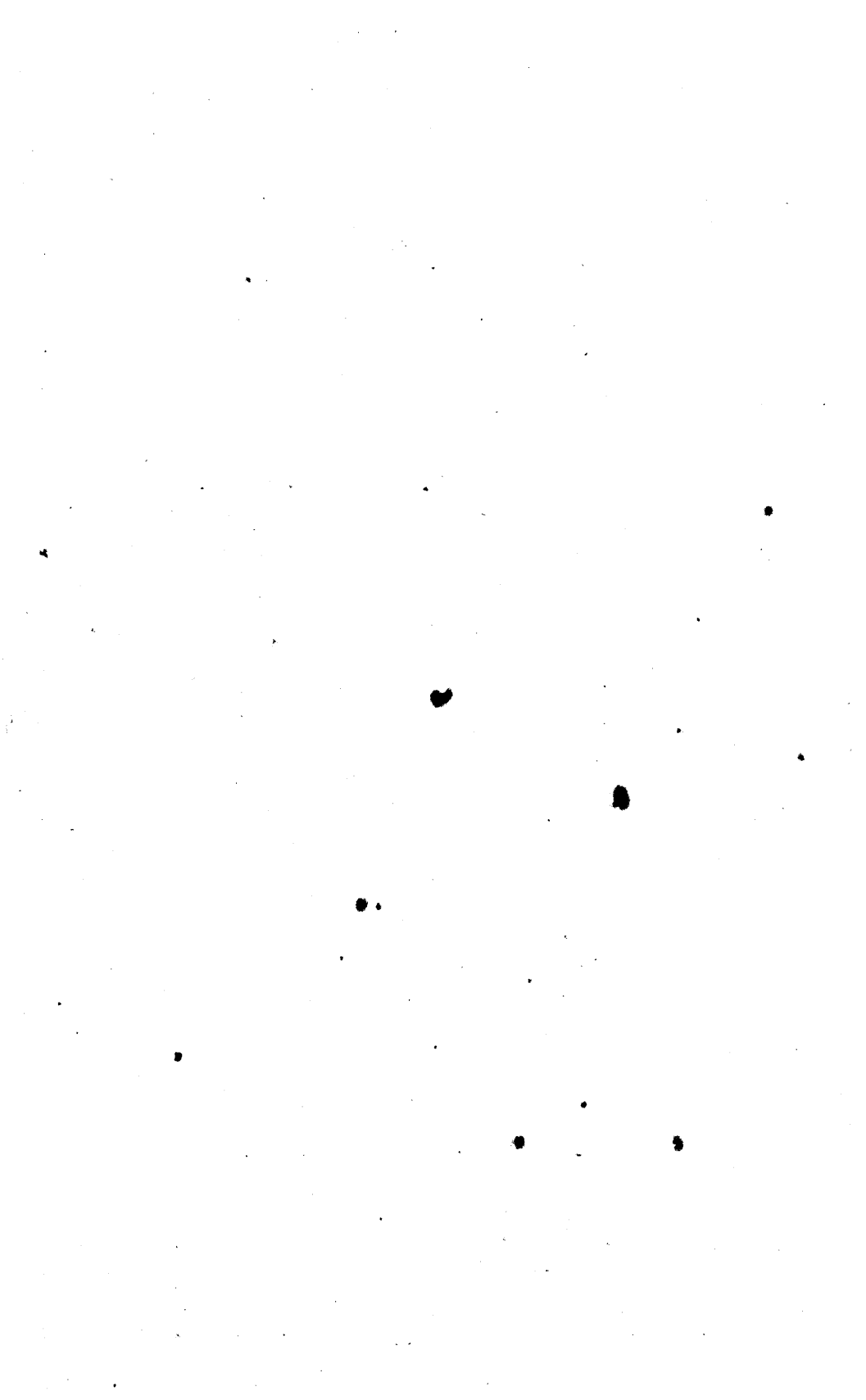
REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION

OF

MAINE.



REPORT.

To the Honorable Governor and

Board of Immigration of the State of Maine:

I have the honor to submit the following report on Scandinavian immigration :

March 25th, 1870, I accepted your commission as agent to establish a first Swedish colony in Maine. I immediately commenced collecting statistics, procuring maps and plans, and negotiating with the different steamship and railway lines to ascertain the most practicable and cheapest route for transporting the proposed colony from Sweden to Northern Maine.

All preliminaries having been successfully arranged, I sailed from the United States April 30th in the steamship "City of Brooklyn," and landed at Gothenburg, Sweden, via England and the North Sea, on the 16th of May.

The problem now to be solved was this;—could a colony of intelligent, industrious Swedish farmers be induced to pay their own passage, and that of their wives and children, to a comparatively unknown State, four thousand miles away? Your commissioner believed the problem admitted of a satisfactory solution, and went to work accordingly.

A head office was at once established at Gothenburg. Notices, advertisements and circulars, describing our State and the proposed immigration, were scattered broadcast over the country. Agents were employed to canvass the northern provinces, and as soon as the ball was fairly in motion, your commissioner, leaving the office at Gothenburg in charge of Capt. G. W. Schröder, travelled extensively in the interior of Sweden, distributing documents, and talking with the people in the villages, at their homes, by the road side, and wherever or whenever he met them.

To induce the right class of people to pay their way to settle among us, seemed indeed the most difficult part of the whole immigration enterprise. I therefore deemed it expedient to take this point for granted; and in all advertisements, conversations and addresses, to dwell rather on the fact that, as only

a limited number of families could be taken, none would be accepted unless they brought with them the highest testimonials as to character and proficiency in their callings.

The problem which was thus taken for granted soon began to solve itself. Recruits for Maine began to appear. All bore certificates of character under the hand and seal of the pastor of their district, and all who had worked for others, brought recommendations from their employers. These credentials, however, were not considered infallible, some applicants were refused in spite of them, and no one was accepted unless it appeared clear that he would make a good and thrifty citizen of our good State of Maine. In this way a little colony of picked men, with their wives and children, was quickly gathered together. The details of the movement, the arguments used, the objections met, the multitude of questions about our State asked and answered, would fill a volume, and be out of place in a report of this nature. Neither was the colony recruited without opposition. Capital and privilege, always strive to prevent the exodus of labor; and sometimes are reckless as to the means they use. It is sufficient, however, to state that all opposition was successfully silenced or avoided.

By June 23d the colonists had all arrived at Gothenburg, and on the evening of that day your commissioner invited them and their friends to a collation at the Baptist hall in that city. Over two hundred persons were present, and after coffee and cake had been served, according to Swedish custom, addresses were made by S. A. Hedland, Esq., member of the Swedish Parliament, Capt. G. W. Schröder, the leader of the Baptist movement in Sweden, and your commissioner. The exercises were concluded by a prayer from Pastor Trouvé. At this meeting the colonists who had been recruited from nearly every province of Sweden, were brought together and made acquainted, their purpose quickened and invigorated; and from that hour the bonds of common interest and destiny have bound all the individuals into a community. Such a knowledge of Maine and its resources was also imparted by the speakers, that the very friends who before had sought to persuade the colonists not to desert their fatherland, exclaimed: "Ah, if I could only go too!"

At noon of Saturday, June 25th, just forty days after the landing of your commissioner in Sweden, he sailed from Gothenburg in the steamship "Orlando," in company with the first Swedish

colonists of our State, who now left home and country and faced the perils of a voyage of four thousand miles, and the hardships and toils of making a new home in the wilderness of a strange land, without the scratch of a pen by way of contract or obligation, but with simple faith in the honor and hospitality of Maine.

The colony was composed of twenty-two men, eleven women, and eighteen children; in all fifty-one souls. All the men are farmers; in addition, some are skilled in trades and professions; there being among them a pastor, a civil engineer, a blacksmith, two carpenters, a basket-maker, a wheelwright, a baker, a tailor, and a wooden-shoe maker. The women are neat and industrious, tidy housewives, and diligent workers at the spinning-wheel and loom.

All are tall and stalwart, with blue eyes, light hair, and cheerful, honest faces; there is not a physical defect or blemish among them, and it was not without some feelings of State pride that your Commissioner looked upon them as they were mustered on the deck of the "Orlando," and anticipated what great results might flow from this little beginning for the good of Maine.

A heavy northwest gale, during the prevalence of which the immigrants were compelled to keep below, while the hatches were battened down over their heads, rendered our passage over the North Sea very disagreeable, and so retarded our progress that we did not reach the port of Hull till Monday evening, June 27th. The next day we crossed England by rail to Liverpool. Here was an unavoidable delay of three days. On Saturday, July 2d, we sailed in the good steamship "City of Antwerp," of the Inman line, for America.

The passage over the ocean was a pleasant one, and on Wednesday, July 13th, we landed at Halifax and continued our journey across the peninsula of Nova Scotia, over the bay of Fundy, and up the river St. John. The inhabitants along the route turned out very generally to see the new comers, and there was an universal expression of regret that so fine a body of immigrants should pass through the Provinces instead of settling there.

July 21st we arrived at Tobique, on the St. John river, and at ten o'clock on the morning of Friday, the 22d, drove across the border into Maine and the United States.

The American flag was now unfurled from the foremost carriage, a salute of cannon fired from Fort Fairfield, and the colony welcomed to the soil of Maine by Hon. P. P. Burleigh of your board, in an appropriate speech.

A multitude of people received us at Fort Fairfield. A. C. Cary, Esq., called them to order, and a meeting was organized by the choice of Hon. Isaac Hacker as chairman. Mr. Hacker, after a pertinent speech, introduced Judge William Small, who welcomed the Swedish immigrants in a judicious, elaborate and eloquent address. He was followed by Rev. Daniel Stickney of Presque Isle, in a stirring and telling speech. The remarks of these gentlemen were then given to the Swedes in their own tongue by your commissioner, who afterwards expressed their gratitude at the unexpected and generous hospitality of the citizens of Aroostook.

The Swedes were then invited to a sumptuous collation in the town hall. At two o'clock we resumed our journey up the fertile valley of the Aroostook, and late in the afternoon arrived at Caribou bridge. A salute of cannon announced our approach, and a concourse of five hundred people, with a fine brass band, escorted us into the village of Caribou. John S. Arnold, Esq., delivered an address of welcome, and the citizens invited us to a bountiful supper in Arnold's hall, where also the settlers passed the night.

Next morning the Swedish immigrant train was early in motion, accompanied by many citizens of the vicinity. The long line of wagons slowly wound their way among the stumps of the newly cut wood road, and penetrated a forest which now for the first time was opened for the abode of man.

At 12 o'clock, noon, of Saturday, July 23d, 1870, just four months from the passage of the act authorizing this enterprize, and four weeks from the departure of the immigrants from Sweden, the first Swedish colony of our State arrived at their new home in the wilds of Maine. We called the spot "*New Sweden*," a name at once commemorative of the past and auspicious of the future.

There is no better township in Maine for agricultural purposes than New Sweden, or township No. 15, Range 3, west of the east line of the State, as it stands on the map. On every hand the land rolls up into gentle hard-wood ridges, covered with a stately growth of maple, birch, beech and ash. In every valley between these ridges flows a brook, and along its banks grow the spruce, fir and cedar. The soil is a rich, light loam, overlying a hard layer of clay, which in turn rests upon a ledge of rotten slate, with perpendicular rift. The ledge seldom crops out, and the land is remarkably free from stones.

Your board had cut a road in to the township, felled one hundred and twenty-five acres of trees, and erected and nearly finished six

log-houses, prior to our arrival. In one of these houses the stores were placed, and the fifty colonists crowded into the other five.

Your commissioner anticipated some difficulty in assigning homes to the settlers. Some farms were undoubtedly better than others. To draw lots for them seemed to be the only fair way of distribution; yet in so doing friends from the same province who had arranged to help each other in their work, might be separated by several miles.

Every difficulty was finally avoided, by dividing the settlers into little groups of four friends each, and the farms into clusters of four, and letting each group draw a cluster, which was afterwards distributed by lot among the members of the group.

The division of farms was thus left entirely to chance, and yet friends and neighbors were kept together.

The drawing took place Monday afternoon, July 25th. With but two exceptions, every one was satisfied, and these two were immediately made happy by exchanging with each other. When this exchange was effected, every Swede was convinced that just the right lot had fallen to him, and was enabled to find something or other about his possessions which in his eye made it superior to all others. So surely does ownership beget contentment.

Much work remained to be done. The Swedes too must be supplied with food till they could harvest their first crop. To put them in the way of earning their living by their labor was a natural suggestion. Your commissioner therefore at once set the Swedes at work felling trees, cutting out roads and building houses, allowing them one dollar a day for their labor, payable in provisions, tools, &c. The prices of these necessaries were determined by adding to the first cost the expense of transportation, plus ten per cent. for breakage and leakage.

Capt. N. P. Clasé, a Swede who speaks our language, and can keep accounts in single entry in English, was then placed in charge of the store-house. He opened an account with every settler, charging each with all goods received from the store. Every Swedish working party was placed under a foreman, who kept, in a book furnished him, the time of each man. These time books were handed in once a week, to Capt. Clasé, the store-keeper, and the men credited with their work at the rate of one dollar a day.

The Swedes thus did the work which the State would otherwise have been compelled to hire other laborers to do, and were paid in the very provisions which otherwise the State would have been

compelled to give them. By this arrangement, also, all jealousy was avoided in regard to the distribution of rations; and in their consumption the rigid Swedish economy was always exercised, which could hardly have been the case if the food had fallen to them like manna, without measure or price.

And so the work went briskly and happily on. The primeval American forest rang from morn till eve with the blows of the Swedish axe. The prattle of Swedish children, and the song of Swedish mothers made unwonted music in the wilds of Maine. One cloudless day succeeded another. The heats of summer were tempered by the woodland shade in which we labored. New clearings opened out, and new log-houses were rolled up on every hand. Odd bits of board and the happily twisted branches of trees, were quickly converted into needed articles of furniture. Rustic bedsteads, tables, chairs, and the omnipresent cradle, made their appearance in every house; and Swedish industry and ingenuity soon transformed every log-cabin into a home.

One hundred acres of forest were granted each settler; a 'chopping' of five acres had been made by your board on each lot. In nearly every instance, the trees were felled on the contiguous corners of four lots, and a square chopping of twenty acres made around the point where four lots met, five acres of which belonged to each of the four farms. The largest possible amount of light and air was thus let into each lot, and the settlers were better enabled to help one another in clearing. As the choppings had not yet been burnt over, the houses were built outside them, and being placed in couples on the opposite sides of the road every household had a near neighbor. Nearly every habitation was also within easy distance of a spring of living water.

The houses built by the State in New Sweden are all of uniform pattern. They were designed by our able and efficient Land Agent, Hon. P. P. Burleigh, and erected under the immediate superintendence of Judah D. Teague and Jacob Hardison, Esqs. They are built of peeled logs; are 18x26 feet on the ground, one and a half stories high, seven feet between floors, and have two logs above the second floor beams, which, with a square pitch roof, gives ample room for chambers. The roofs are covered with long shaved shingles of cedar, made by hand on the township. The space on ground floor is divided off, by partitions of unplanned boards, into one general front room, 16x18 feet, one bed-room, 10 feet square, and pantry adjoining, 8x10 feet. On this floor are four windows;

one is also placed in the front gable end above. In the general room of each house is a second-size Hampden cooking stove, with a funnel running out through an iron plate in the roof. On the whole, these log cabins in the woods are very convenient and comfortable structures; they present a pleasing appearance from without, and within are full of contentment and industry.

Within a week of our arrival on the township, the immigrants wrote a joint letter to Sweden, declaring that the State of Maine had kept its faith with them in every particular; that the land was fertile, the climate pleasant, the people friendly, and advising all their countrymen emigrating to America to come to the New Sweden in Maine. This letter was published in full in all the leading journals throughout Sweden, and cannot fail of influencing the emigrating classes there.

Between August 10th and 20th, nearly all the choppings were fired. On some, good burns were obtained, and nothing but the trunks and larger branches of the trees left unconsumed, on the ground; the fire merely flashed over others, leaving behind the whole tangled mass of branches, trunks and twigs to fret the settler. From this time forward till snow fell, every Swede that could be spared from the public works was busily engaged from sunrise to sunset with axe and brand on his clearing, "junking," piling and burning the logs—clearing the land for a crop.

By September 15th large patches of land were successfully burnt off and cleared, and the Swedes commenced sowing an acre or half acre each with winter wheat or rye. Sixteen acres in all were sowed with rye and four with wheat.

Meanwhile the colony steadily increased. Now and then a Swedish immigrant dropped in, took up a lot, received an axe and went to work. September 14th a detachment of twelve arrived, and October 31st twenty more followed, direct from Sweden. Three births and two marriages were also interesting incidents in the early life of the colony.

Every Sabbath divine service was held by Nils Olsson, the Swedish pastor, and a Sunday school was soon started, which is still in successful operation.

By the wise forethought of Hon. Noah Barker, the surveyor of the township, a lot of fifty acres was reserved for public uses at the cross roads in the centre of the settlement. Here, on the 20th of September, we commenced digging the cellar for a public

building upon a commanding ridge of land. We began hewing out the frame and shaving the shingles for this house the same day. The building was pushed rapidly on, and is now finished with the exception of lathing and plastering. It is 30x45 feet on the ground; has a cellar walled up with hewed cedar, $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet in the clear, is 20 feet stud, and divided into two stories, each 10 feet high; in addition to which, the upper story or hall gains 5 feet out of the roof. A simple and neat tower rises from the front gable end, surmounted by a vane. This structure is erected on State land, and is the property of the State. It has been built in great part by Swedish labor in payment for food. Here is the only cellar on the township, and in this are stowed, safe from frost, potatoes sufficient for wintering the colony and for seed in the spring. The first floor contains a store-room 30 feet square, and two offices 15 feet square each. The upper floor is reached by a flight of steps five feet wide. This second story is a hall 30x45 feet on the floor, 10 feet stud, and 15 feet high along the centre. This hall is used as a church, school house, and general rallying place for the colony. In the spring, too, when the immigrants are pouring in, it will serve as a sort of "Castle Garden," where the immigrant families can sleep under a roof while they are selecting their lots and erecting a shelter of their own. Such a building is indispensable. It is the heart of the colony. It gives character and stability to the settlement; encourages every Swede in his labor, and is of daily need and use.

The dwelling houses erected by the State were built of round logs piled one on the other, with the spaces between open to wind and weather.

As the autumn nights grew frosty, the Swedes ceased for a time clearing their land, and went to work fitting up their houses for winter. They first split out plank from the nearest spruce trees, and taking up their floor nailed a tight plank ceiling underneath the lower floor beams. The spaces between the beams were then compactly filled with dry earth and the floor boards planed and replaced. An upper ceiling of matched boards was now put on, and the room made perfectly tight above and below. The walls of round logs were then hewed down inside and out, the interstices first "chinked up" with moss and then filled in with matched strips of cedar. The walls were thus made as even and perpendicular as those of a timber house, and every building completely defended against the cold and blasts of winter. The houses have been im-

proved in value at least thirty dollars each since they were occupied by the settlers. These houses, together with all the lots on the township, remain the property of the State for five years from the arrival of the colonists. If in the meanwhile any of them depart, the State gains all the improvements they have made.

The passage of the colony from Sweden to Maine cost four thousand dollars, *every dollar of which was paid by the immigrants themselves*. They also carried with them into New Sweden over three thousand dollars in cash, and six tons of baggage, all of which is an absolute gain to the State.

Nearly all the money expended by Maine in this enterprise has been spent within our own borders; the equivalent for every dollar put out, may be seen in the houses and clearings, which are still State property, and which could be sold to-day for enough to reimburse the State for its entire outlay.

Every Swede that started from Scandinavia with your Commissioner, or was engaged by him to follow after, has arrived in Maine and is settled in New Sweden. No settler has left to make him a home elsewhere, but the Swedes themselves have already bought, paid for and sent home to their friends in Sweden, five tickets to Maine. There has not been a day's sickness of man, woman or child in New Sweden; but the following letter will show the fate of another Swedish colony who were transported this year to Mississippi, *at the expense of Mississippi planters*, a few weeks before our colony *paid their own way* to our State:

W. W. THOMAS, JR., ESQ.:

Honored Sir:—Here in Water Valley, Mississippi, lived about one hundred Swedes, who arrived here last spring, on the 29th of May, in charge of Messrs. G. Berglund & Bros. During the entire period since our arrival the most terrible fevers have raged among us. Up to date thirty of our number have died, while in the hospital erected by Messrs. Berglund there have been continually twenty to twenty-five, and are at this moment thirty lying sick. So that this climate is (at least for us Swedes) a most fearful one.

As we have seen, in "The Swedish American" newspaper, accounts of the Swedish colony in the State of Maine, called "New Sweden," we wish to address you in order to ascertain if a certain number of families together with unmarried persons, could gain an entrance and be received into the colony founded in the State of Maine.

Industry and honesty, gratitude and affection, as well as our prayers for the blessing of the Most High, are the only guarantees we have to offer you, and these you surely will not despise. Next spring, or as soon as we have earned enough money to pay our journey, is the time we wish to come to you.

We humbly request a few words in reply, which we shall most eagerly await. In behalf of the families here, I have the honor to subscribe myself,

Your humble servant,

* * *

WATER VALLEY, Miss., Nov. 17. 1870.

In early November your Commissioner secured places for the winter among the farmers and lumbermen of the vicinity for all the Swedes of our colony who wished to work out; thirty were thus supplied with labor at from ten to twenty-five dollars a month including board and lodging. This being accomplished, the public building, or "Capitol," as the Swedes call it, being finished, with the exception of lathing and plastering, and being put in order for use, supplies for winter having been hauled in or contracted for, and the families that were to remain in New Sweden having all been made comfortable for the winter, your Commissioner on the afternoon of Sunday, November 13th, met the settlers at the capitol. It was the first meeting in this building, and the entire colony, men, women and children, assembled there. Your Commissioner distributed among them the certificates of their lots; gave them such words of friendly counsel as the occasion suggested and justified, and then took leave of the colony he had recruited in the Old World and settled in the New.

RESULTS.

A colony of one hundred and fourteen Swedes—fifty-eight men, twenty women, and thirty-six children—have paid their own passage from Sweden and settled on the wild lands of Maine. Seven miles of road have been cut through the forest; one hundred and eighty acres of woods felled; one hundred acres hand-piled, burnt off and cleared ready for a crop, and twenty acres sowed to winter wheat and rye. Twenty-six dwelling-houses and one public building have been built.

A knowledge of Maine, its resources and advantages, has been scattered broadcast over Sweden; a portion of the tide of Swedish immigration turned upon our State, and a practical beginning made towards settling our wild lands and peopling our domain with the most hardy, honest and industrious of immigrants.

THE FUTURE.

This *experiment* is the first successful attempt the State of Maine has ever made to induce foreign immigration. All that has as yet been done is simply sowing the seed. The seed must be cultivated if we would reap a harvest; and it remains for the legislature to determine whether the results of this year shall stand as an isolated, spasmodic effort, or be the commencement of a broad, systematic, statesmanlike policy for peopling our State and realizing our latent wealth.

The lessons of the census are painful to recount or consider. While our whole country has increased in population one-quarter in the last decade, our own State has practically come to a stand still. We remain with a population of a little over 600,000, while were we as densely inhabited according to our area as our little neighbor Rhode Island we should number over 6,000,000. And yet what elements of empire do we lack? Fertile lands, noble rivers, colossal water-power, and harbors countless and unrivalled, all are ours. We lack only labor to utilize the advantages lying waste around us. We lack men.

The policy of our State has been heretofore, if not opposed, at least indifferent to immigration. While the Western States have been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in circulating information favorable to themselves, and employing agents in nearly every country and port of Europe, Maine, until 1870, has raised no voice. While the West, under the homestead law, has been and still is *giving* every actual settler one hundred and sixty acres of land, and sounding the watchword, "Free homes for the homeless," throughout Europe, Maine has been retailing her lands at fifty cents an acre, payable in road labor, to the hardy few who have hunted up the law, searched out the land, and been willing to hew themselves a home out of the forest. How slowly the State is being settled under this policy is shown, not only by the unpleasant facts of the census, but by the very township on which the Swedes are located; for New Sweden, although possessing lands of unsurpassed fertility, although within six miles of a prosperous village, although surveyed and run out into lots in 1861 (as can be seen by the old blazings and dates on the trees)

remained without a settler till taken possession of by a colony from over the ocean.

It is a fact patent to all, that our own citizens do not take kindly to farming. Our young men wish to be the lawyers, doctors, ministers, traders, brokers or factors of the farmers, laborers and bona fide producers of the country. Our own youth leave the old homestead, and not finding sufficient producing population in the State, to support them in their callings, go West, where the producers are settling by thousands and where, on their thrift, professions and trades may also thrive. The result is that the rural population of Maine is decreasing; and much, if not the greater portion, of our farming lands is neither more fertile nor more valuable than it was ten years ago. The remedy for all this is to cover our State with tillers of the soil,—with actual producers, upon whom every other strata of society must rest. Then will our waste land be turned into productive farms; taxable property will be created; real estate will readily advance in value; our cities grow apace; manufactures be multiplied; and our sons remain at home, for the increased volume of business will require the trained services of them all.

We have room enough for all the farmers that will come to us. Maine has a larger area of unsettled land than is included within the entire boundaries of our mother State, Massachusetts; and of this the State yet owns 526,114.83 acres, of which 246,843.38 acres are settling lands, unencumbered, ready to-day to be taken up by the settler, and furnishing ample territory on which to establish a colony that will largely affect the destinies of the State. We can procure no better settlers than the Swedes. We are all convinced of this. Industrious, economical and moral, their arctic home especially fits them for dwelling in our northern clime, which, by comparison, seems as warm and genial to them as Virginia to us.

It is not necessary to start the stream of Swedish immigration. It is already pouring thousands upon our shores, and already we have a little Swedish colony planted upon our State lands, towards which a portion of the immigration stream will naturally flow.

The Kingdom of Sweden numbers 4,173,080 inhabitants; and the following table, taken from the official Swedish statistics, published this year at Stockholm, shows the large amount and increase of Swedish emigration to the United States for the past ten years:

1860	266
1861)	
1862	
1863 }	9,402
1864	
1865]	
1866	4,466
1867	5,893
1868	21,472
1869	(estimated) 35,000

Where do these Swedes go? To the Northwest. This volume of stalwart humanity flows *past* Maine, and is absorbed by Minnesota, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Michigan, and the territories of our great Northwest, enriching districts many of them as far north and as cold as northernmost Maine, because their advantages have been successfully advertised, and because the immigrant knew he should find his countrymen there.

We have then an increasing stream of Swedish immigration flowing to the United States, which in 1869 amounted to 35,000 souls. This stream flows to comparatively few States, and these nearly all *Northern ones*. Maine's fair quota of this immigration is not less than 3,000 souls a year, which if the common estimate of the cash value of the immigrant to the State be correct, will add more than \$1,000,000 per annum to our wealth, and is the prize which Maine should strive for and win.

In securing Swedish immigration for ourselves, we shall be forced to compete at every step with the Western States; and to compete successfully, we have only to follow out the liberal policy which was inaugurated by the Legislature of 1870, and which thus far has been crowned with complete success. The chief measures of this policy are two; both very simple:

- 1st. One hundred acres of land *free* to every actual settler.
- 2d. Advertising this fact broadcast over Sweden.

With this policy Maine can shout "*free homes for the homeless*" as loudly as the West; but Maine can never attract immigration to herself with the inducement of fifty cents, or any other sum, per acre for our lands, payable in work or any other way, while the West, under the homestead law, offer one hundred and sixty acres of prairie land *free*.

The land must be given to induce the immigrant to pay his way to it;

but the gift should be guarded by proper conditions, and no settler should receive a deed of his land until he has lived on it five years, built him a comfortable house thereon, and cleared at least fifteen acres of land.

To advertise our free farms and their advantages successfully, an agent should be employed in Sweden to circulate by pamphlet, in the newspapers, by letter and orally, information upon the climate, soil, productions and resources of Maine. In such communications especial reference should be made to the productiveness of our lands, their nearness to the seaboard and a market, to the fact that in point of expense Maine lies but half way between Sweden and the Mississippi valley, to the healthful salubrity of our high, thoroughly drained land, in contrast with the fever and ague swamps of the miasmatic West, and to the very important fact that there is now a thriving Swedish colony in Maine, which will welcome its countrymen with open arms.

Such an agent will also be necessary to answer the innumerable letters about Maine that are sure to come pouring in, to protect the emigrants from imposition by the runners and agents of the different steamship lines, and to see the Swedes fairly started on the right way to our State. He should be appointed as soon as possible in order to influence the early spring emigration of 1871.

The ignorance of the Swedish working classes in regard to Maine is great, and not to be wondered at, perhaps, when we consider that the country lies some four thousand miles away, and that until last spring Maine never cared to make herself known.

Your Commissioner while in Sweden was very frequently asked if Maine was one of the United States, and one seeker after truth wrote enquiring among much else "Are there in Maine any wild horses or crocodiles?" Such ignorance should be dissipated by ourselves. The Swedish immigrant should be taught that Maine is one of the free States of America, that we raise neither wild horses nor crocodiles, but that the new lands of Northern Maine can easily produce thirty bushels of wheat and four hundred bushels of potatoes to the acre, and that he may have one hundred acres of this land *as a gift* by simply coming and settling among us.

Another agent should be employed at New Sweden to receive the immigrants, point out to them the location of the lots and roads, and give them such other assistance and information as is needed by strangers in a strange land. The entire immigration enterprise

of the State, at home and in Sweden, should be under the direction and control of some central Commission, resident in Maine.

The little Swedish colony already established among us is the nucleus around which the future Swedish immigration to Maine will gather. Without such a colony it would be impossible to attract any large number of Swedes to us; with it the first and most difficult step in the entire immigration movement is accomplished.

It was found absolutely indispensable, in order that this first colony might effect a permanent lodgement on the soil of Maine to erect a central building or store-house and to supply the colonists with food until they get their first crops. An appropriation is needed to furnish the colony with supplies until next September, and to lath, plaster and finish the store-house. The supplies should be sold the colonists at cost, and payment taken in labor at one dollar per day on the roads and public building.

A turnpiked road is needed from Caribou to the centre of New Sweden, a distance of eight miles; and branch roads radiating thence over the township should be at least cut out through the woods. About three miles of the present road to New Sweden is already turnpiked and in tolerable condition, leaving but five to build. As early as possible next Spring this road, as well as the cross roads in New Sweden and adjoining townships, should be laid out under the direction of the land agent, in order that the labor expended upon them may be of permanent value. The lots should be run out *after* the roads are located, and placed to face the road. If practicable, all this work should be done in season to anticipate the spring tide of immigration.

A small appropriation is also needed for seed for the colonists next spring. It is important that they have the best seed to commence with, which with their ignorance of our language and country they could hardly procure if left to themselves. Some State aid is desirable and necessary to establish an English school in New Sweden.

The appropriations for seed, food and buildings, only pertain to the first colony, the first year, and the very inception of the enterprise. After the first crop is harvested, this first colony will not only take care of itself, but extend to their newly arrived countrymen the same helping hand the State has given them.

If the measures recommended are adopted, we believe that in a few years at farthest the stream of Swedish immigration to Maine

will be strong and broad enough to roll on of itself, and that not only all the public lands will be largely settled by Swedes, but they will spread over the entire State, become our farm hands, mill hands, house servants, sailors and fishermen, form an important working element among us, and add thousands to the population, and millions to the wealth of Maine.

W. W. THOMAS, JR.,

Commissioner of Immigration.

AUGUSTA, December 15, 1870.