

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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PROGRESS REPORT

State Military Defense Commission

State of Maine

TO

SPECIAL SESSION OF 89TH LEGISLATURE

OCTOBER 22, 1940

Printed by Order of the House of Representatives

STATE OF MAINE
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
AUGUSTA

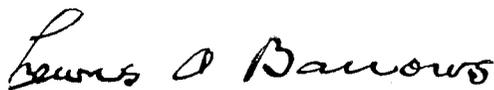
October 22, 1940

To the President and Members
of the Senate:

To the Speaker and Members
of the House:

I submit herewith a report from the Maine Defense Commission, summarizing its activities to date. By reading this report the members of the Legislature will be informed of such progress as has been possible up to the present time, and at the same time it will become a part of your official record.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lewis D. Barrows".

Governor

B:R
Enclosure

PROGRESS REPORT

To the Members of the 89th Maine Legislature:

The State Military Defense Commission of Maine was created by legislative enactment of June 27, 1940; its members were appointed June 29; and its meeting for organization held on July 3rd.

The membership of the Commission consists of Colonel Sherman N. Shumway, Bangor, and George W. Lane, Lewiston—term of one year; Dana C. Douglass, Portland, and George Otis Smith, Skowhegan—term of two years; Robert Braun, Portland, and Colonel Frank E. Southard, Augusta—term of three years; Governor Lewis O. Barrows, Newport, Ex-officio; Adjutant General James W. Hanson, Augusta, Ex-officio.

At the first meeting, the Governor was elected Chairman and Frank E. Southard Vice Chairman and Secretary; at the second meeting, on July 5th, Chauncey S. Robinson, Assistant Chief Engineer of the Boston and Maine and Maine Central Railroads, was employed as the Commission's Engineer and Administrative Director.

As of this date the Commission has held eleven meetings, with full attendance except as members have been out of the State; two visits by different groups of members were made to Washington in July for consultation with the Chief of Staff, General Marshall, and other Army officers; and inspection trips to airports and armories have been made by the Director, often accompanied by one or more members of the Commission.

After the less than four months since your enactment of the emergency legislation, the State Military Defense Commission has the honor of submitting to the Legislature the following report of progress.

AIRPORTS

On July 10, in Washington, D. C., the representatives of the Commission—Chairman Barrows, Adjutant General Hanson, George Otis Smith, and Administrative Director Robinson—received from the Chief of Staff a priority list of six airports from those especially selected by the War Department as being strategically important and listed as essential for National Defense Projects in the State of Maine.

These six Maine airports given priority on July 10th, as confirmed by Major Arthur R. Wilson of the General Staff, in his letter of July 15, were in the order given: Bangor, Houlton, Princeton, Caribou-Fort Fairfield-Presque Isle Area, Auburn-Lewiston, and Millinocket. Representatives of the Army eventually chose Presque Isle as the locus.

The War Department's information was that construction must be done through W. P. A. channels, with some municipality or the State sponsoring the project and making a financial contribution thereto. The Defense Commission does not act as a sponsor but agreed to pay to the municipal sponsor a part of its contribution when the completed project had final or Presidential approval.

First on this list and emphasized to us as of prime importance for Military Aviation was the Bangor, Maine, Project. The sponsor's project proposal for the Bangor Airport was received by the Commission for execution. At the called meeting on July 19, however, the unanimous opinion of the Commission was that the proposal, in providing for the construction of only one runway, failed to serve the legislative purpose of "coordinating National Defense in the State of Maine." Inasmuch as all breakdowns of airport development projects have specified the class of the proposed Bangor, Maine, Airport as number four, and, moreover, in our conversation with the Chief of Staff in Washington, the importance of the complete development was stressed, yet the final paragraph of the unilateral agreement of the sponsor's proposal, as submitted to our Commission, relieved the Works Progress Administration of any obligations to complete the project.

As reported to the Secretary of War by Governor Barrows in his letter of July 20th, 1940:

"This unsatisfactory situation forces the Commission to seek guidance through further conference in your Department.

As Chairman of the Commission, I wish to assure you that the Maine Commission is ready and anxious to meet, to the extent of our ability, the needs of the Air Corps of the United States Army, and in this initial project which I definitely understood when in Washington to be number one, both the City and State are ready to cooperate far beyond the figure set up for land costs in the project proposal.

This increased participation by City and State is predi-

cated on not a partial development, as submitted to the Commission, but the complete development as indicated to us as desired by the War Department.

I sincerely hope that some practical procedure may be adopted whereby this outpost State of Maine may implement more expeditiously and effectively the aims of the Army in National Defense."

This letter was presented as a basis of a personal conference in Washington with representatives of the Chief of Staff on July 23 by Col. Sherman N. Shumway, George W. Lane, Jr., and Director Robinson, representing the Commission.

Secretary of War Stimson's reply of July 31, to the Commission's request for more expeditious and positive procedure for cooperation between State and Nation in accomplishing the National Defense aims of the Army, in substance only confirmed the oral answer made to the Commission's representatives on July 23, in effect that these projects must proceed in accordance with W. P. A. regulations, the Secretary's concluding sentence being:

"I feel sure that the airport improvement program which your Commission is now prepared to undertake with the assistance of the Works Projects Administration will progress rapidly and will constitute a fine contribution to the national defense."

On July 26 a resolution, as follows, was passed, a certified copy being forwarded immediately to the Federal Government:

"ON MOTION, duly made and seconded, it was VOTED that in considering the project proposal for an addition to the airport at Bangor, Maine, as submitted by the Works Progress Administration and aggregating \$267,393 for the construction of a third runway, the State Military Defense Commission resolves:

THAT the cooperation of the State of Maine with the city of Bangor be related to a project proposal for the complete development from a Class 2 airport to a Class 4 airport as desired by the War Department and required for military defense;

THAT the cooperation be limited to providing funds for the purchase of lands essential to this development, the terms of this cooperation being that the land be purchased by the city of Bangor and leased to the War Department for a period of twenty-five years, the City of Bangor agreeing to pay not in excess of \$75,000 towards the said land and the State of

Maine through the State Military Defense Commission agreeing to pay whatever the difference in cost may be above that paid by the city of Bangor so that a good title to the land will vest in said City of Bangor ;

AND FURTHER, that this proposed contribution by the State of Maine toward National Defense is distinctly conditioned upon the definite and specific statements of responsible officials of the Federal Government to this Commission.

THEREFORE, the Military Defense Commission of the State of Maine requests confirmation of our oral understanding of the conference held in the office of Mr. H. O. Hunter, Deputy Commissioner, Tuesday, July 23, that the Works Progress Administration approve the general plan of the Class 4 airport contemplated at Bangor, in accordance with plan dated July 19, 1940, enclosed herewith, and will prosecute the work to completion if possible by June 30, 1941.

Would also appreciate confirmation of our understanding with Mr. Fitzgerald, W. P. A. Administrator for the State of Maine, that he will carry the work to completion by that date, using such equipment and providing by contract for such items as paving and lighting as would be required for the necessary prompt execution of the project."

The Commission next received a communication from the Deputy Commissioner W. P. A. at Washington, as follows:

T E L E G R A M

"PM 5 88 NL Govt = PFE Washington DC 1

The Honorable Lewis O. Barrows

Governor of Maine Augusta Me =

1940 Aug 2 AM 7 49

BANGOR AIRPORT WAS CERTIFIED BY SECRETARY OF WAR ON JULY 17 AS IMPORTANT FOR MILITARY PURPOSES UNDER SECTIONS 1 (C) AND (D), 11 (B), AND 14 (B) EMERGENCY RELIEF APPROPRIATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 1941. IF A WPA PROJECT APPLICATION TO IMPROVE BANGOR AIRPORT IN CONFORMITY WITH WAR DEPARTMENTS REQUIREMENTS IS SUBMITTED TO THIS OFFICE THROUGH STATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR MAINE, AND APPROVED BY THE PRESIDENT, THE WPA WILL EXPEDITE ITS PROSECUTION TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE UNDER EXISTING LAWS AND COMPLETE IT IF POSSIBLE BY JUNE 30, 1941 =

HOWARD O HUNTER DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

17 (C) (D) 11 (B) 14 (B) 1941 WPA

WPA 30 1941"

The Commission received a letter from the WPA Administrator for the State of Maine, setting forth his intentions as to the prosecution of the work at Bangor.

Meanwhile, the Commission, appreciating the War Department's desire for a complete development of the priority list of the six airports and the conditions of the Commission's commitments, organized and put into the field survey parties to complete the field data and quantity estimates essential to their prosecution, this work being in cooperation with municipal engineering forces where such were available.

The Bangor data for total project were completed and given Federal authority August 3, the Lewiston-Auburn on August 13, Princeton, August 29, and the Houlton on September 5. The Millinocket estimate was made without aid from the Commission's forces.

The Commission again urged prompt consideration and approval of these projects and on August 15 passed resolutions pertaining to the Bangor and Lewiston-Auburn projects, these resolutions being forwarded to the Secretary of War:—

"RESOLUTION
OF
STATE OF MAINE MILITARY DEFENSE
COMMISSION

Passed at meeting of Commission on August 15, 1940.

Whereas, Bangor, Maine, airport was certified by the Secretary of War on July 17, 1940, as important for military purposes, and

Whereas, there has been submitted to the State of Maine Administrator for W. P. A. a complete project for a class 4 airport at Bangor, (the first unit being forwarded to the State Administrator, W. P. A., on July 27, 1940, and the second unit on August 5, 1940, totalling \$983,086) and

Whereas, the State Military Defense Commission is willing to make substantial contribution to the completed project at Bangor, in accordance with a resolution adopted by them dated July 26, 1940, a copy of which is hereto attached, and

Whereas, the Secretary of War, the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, has indicated that work should progress rapidly, due to the existing emergency, be it

Resolved, that the State Military Defense Commission earnestly urges that all Federal approvals be given as rapidly as possible, so that the project may be completed by June 30, 1941."

"RESOLUTION
OF
STATE OF MAINE MILITARY DEFENSE
COMMISSION

Passed at a meeting of the Commission on August 15, 1940.

Whereas, Lewiston-Auburn, Maine, airport was named by the War Department as an essential part of the national defense in the State of Maine, and

Whereas, there was submitted to the State of Maine Administrator, W.P.A., on August 13, 1940, plans for a completed class 3 airport at Lewiston-Auburn, and

Whereas, The State Military Defense Commission is willing to make a substantial contribution to the cities of Lewiston and Auburn, sponsors of the project, the total estimated cost of the completed project being \$426,700,

Be it Resolved, that the State Military Defense Commission earnestly urges, in view of the emergency existing, that the necessary Federal approvals be given at the earliest possible moment to bring about the completion of the airport development at Lewiston-Auburn."

On August 16 there appeared a press release that the Bangor site might be abandoned. Later the Commission was advised that abandonment was not contemplated by the Army Staff.

On August 26 a representative of the General Staff called upon members of the Commission, and the situation was fully discussed and the hope expressed that definite, complete approval will be forthcoming soon.

The Commission received from the War Department, under date of August 30, notification of recommendation from the War Department for allocation of funds for the Bangor Municipal Airport in the amount of \$473,333, and approved by the W.P.A., the Department not having received to that date notification of Presidential approval. However, on October 17, 1940, the Commission received confirmation of the President's approval as of October 11 of the remaining unit necessary to complete the Bangor Airport project.

The status of the remaining airport projects is as follows :

Millinocket—1st unit approved by the President, June 29, 1940; 2nd unit, August 31, 1940. The Defense Commission's participation one half of sponsor's contribution not to exceed \$15,000.

Houlton—1st unit approved by the President, June 21, 1940; 2nd unit, October 4, 1940; 3rd unit pending.

Presque Isle—1st unit approved by the President, September 5, 1940; 2nd unit pending.

Auburn-Lewiston—1st unit approved by the President, August 26, 1940; 2nd unit pending.

Princeton—Options on land necessary for airport obtained by Defense Commission. Approval pending.

The Defense Commission total contribution to these six airports will be approximately \$227,000. This estimate is subject to change either up or down, depending on final figures from W.P.A.

In a status report as of September 5, received from the Army General Staff, the list of approved projects for Maine included two airports—Portland and Waterville—other than the six on the priority list of the War Department. This addition in no wise affects the Commission policy of early July, and continuously maintained in all conferences and correspondence, to concentrate its cooperation in national defense on the six airports given special priority by the War Department, because strategically best situated to serve military aviation. In an earlier letter, July 15, to the State Administrator of the Works Projects Administration, a representative of the General Staff had stated that:

“Augusta, Biddeford, Brunswick, Rumford, Sanford, and Waterville, are on equal priority below the first six depending upon the relief labor load available and the amount of funds which can be spent on them. It is understood, of course, that the State of Maine has calls other than the War Department's Airport program for their national defense fund. * * * * The War Department intends to approve, if possible, sufficient funds for the minimum construction necessary for Army planes at all twelve airports, and, as I said above, to the extent that the State of Maine can contribute to at least the first six which are on priority, by that amount will we be able to save not only for other Maine airports, but also for strategic airports in the rest of the country.”

As bearing upon the present stage of progress of the airport program of the State Military Defense Commission, the Legislature is respectfully informed:

That, the original policy of the Commission, responsive to the plain purpose of the Act, and predicated upon first hand knowledge of the defense program of Army Aviation, and that alone, remains in full effect:

That, this policy of promoting military defense solely, has come to be fully understood by Federal officials, in Maine and in Washington;

That in no instance has delay been occasioned by inaction by the Commission's field staff or hesitation on the part of the Commission itself; but,

That, the vexatious slowness in accomplishment at the selected airports can be traced primarily to Federal administrative delays, due in turn to the involved official procedure.

While the airport program has necessarily been given priority in attention, both in Commission consideration and engineering activities of the staff, the other mandates of the Legislature have not been overlooked nor laid aside.

ARMORIES

Second only to airport construction are the all too obvious requirements of the National Guard in added storage for modern military equipment—as well as more adequate armory facilities for military training. The mobilization program now in immediate prospect affords ample time for well planned construction of necessary projects.

The broad provisions of the Act under which the Commission operates facilitate effective accomplishment through prompt planning and quality execution, restricted only by the well tested rules of business operation. The progress thus far attained in the armory program may be reported as follows:

Remodeling Milk Street Armory at Portland, contract let September 20, 1940, in the amount of \$20,386.

Construction of a new armory in Brunswick, contract let September 20, 1940, in the amount of \$59,046.61.

Remodeling Head house at Belfast, contract let October 15, 1940, in the amount of \$8,105.02.

Plans and specifications are in preparation for the following armories:

Remodeling building on Stevens Avenue, Portland, for the accommodation of 103rd Infantry, including regimental headquarters; drill shed in Belfast; new armories at South Portland, Saco, Rumford, Norway, Newport, Brewer, Houlton. It is expected that bids will be received for construction purposes within the next two months. It is estimated that the total cost of these armories will be approximately \$791,000.

The Commission found, on inspection of State owned armories, that extensive maintenance repairs were required at the following places: Bath, Gardiner, Bangor and Millinocket. The necessary repairs have been authorized at an estimated expense of \$6,200.

Among other matters with which the Commission has concerned itself is the formation of a National Guard Squadron (aviation unit), and is investigating the possibility of procuring the same and the necessary facilities for its use.

The Commission has selected a site for an artillery range which has been approved by both the United States and Maine National Guard Army officers. The locus includes the towns of Aurora and Amherst and in Plantation 33 and Township 32, all in Hancock County, comprising 9805 acres, including 104 acres as a cantonment area. The United States Army officers state this will provide one of the finest artillery ranges in the entire country, and will be used for bombing practice by the Air Corps and as an infantry combat range, as well as a field artillery range. This area is now under appraisal survey by Prentiss & Carlisle Co., Inc., of Bangor.

TRANSPORTATION

Inseparably connected with the production activities of both farm and factory is the adequacy of transportation facilities. Furthermore, any complete defense program must include transportation, and the Commission is giving consideration to the hazardous conditions of the existing bottleneck over Fore River at Portland, affecting marine, truck and rail transport.

FINANCIAL

August 12, 1940, \$1,000,000 of bonds, or one-half the authorized issue, were sold for \$1,009,030, which amount, less a service charge of \$100, plus accrued interest of \$333.33, made a total of \$1,009,263.33 received from the sale.

Statement of Expenditures to October 1, 1940

Payroll	\$ 6,049.36
Travelling Expenses	1,681.82
Supplies Expendable	352.31
Supplies Non-Expendable	490.62
Printing, Advertising and Mailing Bonds	597.87
Architects Fees	2,000.00
Advertising Bids	62.02
Telephone and Telegraph	12.37
Armory Maintenance	383.90

\$11,630.27

General Overhead

Salaries	\$ 3,091.73
Travelling Expenses	506.96
Printing, Advertising and Mailing Bonds ...	597.87
Telephone and Telegraph Expense	12.37

Supplies

Expendable	338.41
Non-Expendable	490.62

Armories

Overhead	4,436.63
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Artillery Range

Overhead	452.32
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Auburn and Lewiston Airport

Preliminary	114.43
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Bangor Airport

Preliminary	598.54
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Houlton Airport

Preliminary	962.30
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Presque Isle Airport

Preliminary	137.44
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Princeton Airport

Preliminary	1,141.26
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Belfast Armory

Preliminary	132.80
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Brunswick Armory	
Preliminary	2,019.47
Newport Armory	
Preliminary	31.10
Portland Armory—Milk Street	
Preliminary	57.65
Portland Armory—Stevens Ave.	
Preliminary	90.73
Maintenance	383.90
Westbrook	
Preliminary	26.74
	\$11,630.27

Salaries Paid

C. S. Robinson, Administrative Director	191.78	weekly
A. L. Huot, Chief Clerk	40.00	"
Stanley French, Assistant Chief Clerk	35.00	"
Ethel V. Hall, Secretary	20.00	"
Irving W. Russell, Engineer	42.00	"
Chas. H. Folsom, Senior Engineer	60.00	"
J. C. Welch, Senior Engineer	48.00	"
Burleigh Boyd, Engineer's Assistant	36.00	"
Richard C. Hopkins, Rodman	25.00	"
	\$497.78	

Respectfully submitted,

LEWIS O. BARROWS
Chairman

FRANK E. SOUTHARD
Vice Chairman and Secretary

October 21, 1940.