

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FORTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 73.

The Joint Select Committee who were directed by an order of the Legislature to inquire if any measures should be adopted which shall conduce or tend to a more speedy settlement of the unoccupied public lands and unincorporated townships, and to diminish emigration from the State, having had the same under consideration, ask leave to

R E P O R T :

That in the opinion of the committee there are so many inducements held out to the young men and women of Maine to leave their native State and seek remunerative employment and success in life abroad, that it is becoming a question of the first importance to those who have the welfare of the State especially in charge, not only to seriously consider the subject, but to adopt such measures as shall, after mature consideration, seem best calculated to arrest this tendency to emigration; and by liberal and just measures to encourage our young people to remain on the soil of their birth, and give their best energies to its development and prosperity.

Of the various subjects that call for our attention in this regard, the agricultural interest will without question stand among the foremost. We enjoy a climate admirably adapted to promote health and longevity, and have a soil well fitted to yield in bountiful measure all the substantial products requisite to the comfort and happiness of a large population. But a very small proportion, comparatively, of this soil has yet been brought under cultivation. Vast forests are yet growing on its surface; 375 unincorporated townships, equal to about eight millions of acres, are yet in a state of nature and awaiting the labor of the farmer. Scarcely any thing is grown on these townships to feed the thousands of hardy lumbermen who annually labor in these forests, and nearly all the supplies for them and their teams are imported from other States.

It would seem that a mere statement of these few facts would be sufficient to invite serious inquiry and lead to the adoption of measures, on the part of the State, that will have a tendency to correct, if possible, this manifest and increasing evil. We can hardly expect our intelligent young men and women will consent to become pioneers and settlers on these new lands without such encouragement as will convince them that it will be as much for their permanent interest to do so as to seek their fortunes in other States. But with due encouragement and the fostering care of the State, it is believed they may be induced to remain and establish homes and families here, and gradually convert these lands into fertile fields, yielding abundant harvests for all our population. Among the prominent demands on the State to effect the objects herein proposed, one of the first would seem to be the laying out and constructing safe and substantial highways and bridges through our public lands; and second, the providing a sufficient and permanent school fund for every settlement, so that each child in it may receive a good common school education at the public charge.

The committee respectfully recommend the passage of the accompanying resolve.

Per order.

IRA D. STURGIS.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVE designed to promote the settlement of the public and other lands in the state.

Resolved, That the governor be and hereby is authorized, with the advice and consent of the council, to appoint three suitable persons whose duty it shall be to ascertain what measures, if any, should be adopted by the state to induce settlements upon its unpeopled townships; where aid should be given in constructing necessary roads; what provision should be made for the education of the children of settlers at the expense of the state or otherwise, and report to the next legislature, with such other suggestions and recommendations as they may deem suitable to give effect to the purpose contemplated by this resolve. And the governor and council shall audit the claims of the commissioners for their services, and the sums thus allowed are to be paid out of the state treasury on the governor's warrant.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
February 25, 1869. }

Read and ordered to be printed under the Joint Rule.

S. J. CHADBOURNE, *Clerk.*