

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# FORTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE.

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HOUSE.

No. 84.

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The Joint Special Committee to which was referred so much of Governor's Message as relates to Scandinavian Immigration, ask leave to present the following

## REPORT :

The Scandinavian peninsula, embracing the countries of Norway and Sweden, lies above 56° north latitude, which is, at least, 12° farther north than our own State. The area is a little less than 300,000 square miles, of which only one-fiftieth part is arable land. The population is about five and a half millions, or nineteen to a square mile, or about nine hundred and fifty to each square mile of arable land. The people subsist by lumbering, mining, ship-building, commerce and their fisheries, which latter, however, are in a declining state, the herring, which used to visit the Baltic in large schools, having almost entirely disappeared.

Agriculture is in a very backward state, and the quantity of cereals required to make up the deficiency of production in Norway has doubled in the last fifty years. In 1845 there was only *one* one hundred and thirty-seventh part of the whole surface under cultivation, and most of that was of so light and sandy a nature that it yielded scarcely more than the seed. Since that date, both in Norway and Sweden, the crops have been so light that the peasantry have lived with starvation staring them constantly in the face. Wheat is hardly raised at all, and their supply of barley, rye and oats, is so short that they habitually lay in a store of the inner bark of trees, which they chop up and mix with their meal, and by this means alone, are able to pass their long and dreary winters. Their stock is small and alike inferior for beef or the dairy, and the imports of butter and cheese are large and increasing.

Notwithstanding the privations under which they live, there is no country in Europe where education is so generally diffused. Not one in a thousand Swedes is unable to read and write; and,

in Norway, all children of seven years in the towns, and of eight in the country, are required to be in attendance upon the public schools, and, generally, so continue until they are between fourteen and seventeen. The religion is Lutheran almost exclusively, and the parochial clergy are as patriarchs among their parishioners, exercising about all the government that they need, and that in the most quiet and inexpensive way.

The wages which the laboring classes are accustomed to receive are so extremely low as hardly to be believed. From twenty-five cents to one dollar per month for females, and about thrice that amount for males, is all that is paid, and labor is scarce at these prices.

Now if we could induce these people to immigrate to Maine it would certainly be to the advantage of the State; and we now come to consider the obstacles in the way of such a result.

In 1862, the annual emigration from Sweden for the United States did not exceed two thousand; but in three years from that time, the number was increased to ten thousand per annum. This increase was brought about in this way: Secretary Seward, then beginning to see the need of men in this country, authorized our consuls to make representations of the advantages offered to emigrants here, and to spread abroad a knowledge of our homestead laws. This was done especially by Mr. Thomas, then our consul at Gothenburg, (Sweden,) who took a lively interest in the matter, and the result was, as we have stated, an increase in immigration of five hundred per cent. in three years!

We will now briefly consider why Maine does not receive a part of this very desirable class of immigrants; for, coming as they do from a latitude at least 12° higher than our own, and from a country far less inviting, both in soil and climate, and, having been accustomed to lumbering, shipbuilding and fishing—vocations so prominent in Maine—we might reasonably expect that the homes they could find here, would be as congenial, at least, as would those of the treeless prairies, or malarious river bottoms of the west, especially as we could throw in that other consideration, of being a thousand miles nearer their former homes, and, also, that of being in a maritime rather than an inland State.

But we must remember that the representations made through our consuls by direction of Secretary Seward, called attention, exclusively, to the public lands of the west, and, while Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, were described as "New Edens," Maine

was probably never alluded to, nor is it likely that one Swede in a thousand has any knowledge of the fact, that millions of acres of good land in our State, are awaiting settlement. "Maine is in New England, and New England is an old and closely settled country. No new lands are left there;" these are the ideas prevailing all over Europe in regard to us. But these ideas can be corrected, and should be, and Maine should get her share of immigration, that flows in an unceasing flood to America.

Almost every State in the Union, that has any unsettled lands, is waking up to the importance of the advertising principle, and is letting the world know what advantages it can afford to capital and population. The great want of Maine to-day is population;—men and women, bone, muscle, and brain. "Nothing," says a distinguished farmer, "pays so well as labor," and if labor pays on a farm it will pay in the State. Population will build railroads, highways, and bridges, for which we are asked to make so large appropriations every year from the State treasury; and, above all, we respectfully submit that foreign immigration would do more than anything else to keep our own people at home.

We therefore recommend the passage of the bill which is herewith submitted.

GEORGE CARY, }  
ORRIN McFADDEN, } *Chairmen.*

# STATE OF MAINE.

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IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE.

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AN ACT to promote Scandinavian immigration.

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*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows :*

SECTION 1. There shall be a board of immigration  
2 in this state, which shall be composed of the governor,  
3 the secretary of state, and the land agent ; but the  
4 members of this board shall receive no compensation  
5 for their services.

SECT. 2. This board shall have authority to provide  
2 for the collection of statistics and useful information,  
3 concerning the climate, soil, products, resources, and  
4 amount of unsettled lands in the state, with such other  
5 information as they may deem proper, and for print-  
6 ing the same in the Scandinavian languages in such  
7 form and quantity as they shall think best calculated  
8 to promote the objects of this act ; *provided*, that the  
9 whole amount expended for this purpose shall not ex-  
10 ceed two hundred and fifty-dollars.

SECT. 3. The board of immigration may appoint a

2 suitable person as an agent to proceed to Sweden or  
3 Norway, for the purpose of enlisting a first colony of  
4 immigrants, and to superintend their passage to this  
5 state, and said agent may provide for the free passage  
6 of such immigrants as are not able to provide passage  
7 for themselves ; *provided*, that the amount thus spent  
8 shall not exceed sixty dollars for each family so trans-  
9 ported ; *and provided*, that this shall not apply to  
10 single persons ; *and provided further*, that the whole  
11 sum so spent shall not exceed three thousand dollars.

SECT. 4. The agent provided for in the third section  
2 shall be sent out as early as possible in the spring of  
3 A. D. eighteen hundred and sixty-nine, and the salary  
4 and expenses of such agent shall not exceed twenty-  
5 five hundred dollars.

SECT. 5. It shall be competent for the board of im-  
2 migration to settle such immigrants as may come to  
3 this state under their supervision, on any of the public  
4 lands of the state not otherwise appropriated, giving  
5 to each head of family one hundred and sixty acres on  
6 the same terms as are provided in the homestead laws  
7 of the United States.

SECT. 6. The board of immigration may, if in their  
2 judgment the circumstances require it, make advances  
3 to the immigrants during the first two years after their  
4 arrival, of such provisions and implements as are abso-

5 lutely necessary to their welfare, securing the state  
6 for such advances by a lien on the land donated to  
7 them by the state.

SECT. 7. The several sums appropriated by this act  
2 shall be paid from the treasury out of any funds not  
3 otherwise appropriated on the order of the governor.

SECT. 8. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent with  
2 this act are hereby repealed.

STATE OF MAINE.

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IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }  
March 2, 1869. }

Reported from the Special Committee on Scandinavian Immigration, and pending the acceptance of the Report, ordered printed.

S. J. CHADBOURNE, *Clerk.*