

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Fifty-Seventh Legislature.

HOUSE.

No. 26.

To the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature
assembled :

The State Superintendent, to whom was referred the subject of the establishment of another Normal School, begs leave to submit the following report :

One of the first educators of the world, a few years since said, in a public address, "no state or nation can have an efficient and successful school system, which does not provide for the special training of its teachers; and no schools, yet established, have been found sufficient to do this work save well organized training and normal schools." That is the great need of our schools to-day. "As is the teacher, so is the school." Our teachers lack method, skill, training, in the science and art of teaching. The great, imperative need of our schools at the present time is trained teachers. The State will not have gained all that it ought from its public schools, till a trained teacher shall be in every one of them.

This is the *need*. But what is the *demand*? Are more teachers demanded each year than are supplied by the graduating classes from the two normal schools? It seems that the answer must be in the negative. The standard of qualification *demand*ed by our school managers is very low. Almost any person can procure a certificate to teach in some towns. Agents in hiring teachers have regard to cheapness, not to qualification. Quite a number of the normal graduates of good reputation and success have no schools. The facts seem to warrant the conclusion that no more normal schools of the same class and grade as our present schools are now *demand*ed.

The course in our normal schools is two years. Young men and young women who spend the time and money to complete

such a course cannot afford to teach for the prices offered in the country schools. These teachers are employed in the villages and cities. The country schools have not received the benefit of our normal work.

There are many persons who would like to take advantage of the training of the normal schools, but cannot afford the expense of the two years course. Many of these persons are in school as teachers. They feel the need of more training, a better education. Yet their means are so limited that a two years course is impossible. I would therefore ask the establishment of a normal school, on a plan somewhat different from our present schools. Let the course be limited to six months. Let the examination for entrance be such as would entitle the holder to the lowest grade certificate to teach. Then give them a six months course of thorough review of subjects to be taught, with a study of methods of teaching, school organization, management and discipline, combined with practice in the model school.

In such a school we might graduate three hundred pupils each year, and the cost would be so small as to bring this course within the reach of the teachers in the country schools. It would thus meet and supply a want which must be supplied if our schools are to make progress. I believe the call for such a school is imperative and pressing. It ought to be established the present year.

Where should such a school be located? There are certain principles which must govern, absolutely, the location of such a school.

1st. It must be for the whole State, therefore on the line of railroad, and easy of access to all parts of the State.

2d. It must be in a village or city large enough to afford school children, from the ages of four to fourteen, in sufficient numbers to fill a model school of at least five grades. Without such model school no normal school has any right to exist. No offer of money or buildings ought to be considered for a moment unless these *essential* conditions are fulfilled.

I therefore recommend that the Legislature pass an act, giving to the trustees of the normal schools power to locate such a school, if any city or town, fulfilling these conditions, will deed to said trustees land and buildings thereon, of sufficient capacity, and in such condition, as to meet fully the demands of such school.

NORMAL SCHOOL.

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And that the said trustees, upon such conveyance, be authorized to procure teachers and establish such a school, at a cost per year not greater than that of either of the present normal schools, the cost of the same to be deducted from the public school funds.

W. J. CORTHELL.

AUGUSTA, January 24, 1878.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
January 24, 1878. }

Received, and on motion of Mr. ROBIE of Gorham, ordered
printed.

ORAMANDAL SMITH, *Clerk.*