

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIFTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE.

HOUSE.

No. 99.

REPORT ON THE STATE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MECHANIC ARTS.

Submitted by the Joint Committee consisting of the Agricultural and Educational Committees.

As the Agricultural College has come before the State every year since its establishment, asking aid, it is necessary for the members of the legislature to know how much money has already been appropriated for its use, and what its present financial condition is, in order to determine justly and intelligently what course to pursue towards this institution in the future. From the report of the treasurer it appears that the following sums have been appropriated to this college, viz :

In the year 1867.....	\$20,000
“ 1868.....	10,000
“ 1870.....	50,000
“ 1871.....	6,000
“ 1872.....	18,000
“ 1873.. ..	24,000
“ 1874.....	12,500
“ 1875.....	10,500
“ 1876.....	8,000
“ 1877.....	15,218
“ 1878.....	6,500
Total.....	<hr/> \$180,718

The amount derived from sale of land donated by Congress for the purpose of establishing the institution, together with accrued interest, is \$132,500. The farm, consisting of 376 acres, was given by the towns of Oldtown and Orono to the institution for its use as long as it shall remain a college of agriculture and mechanic arts, but reverts to the towns when it shall cease to exist as such an institution. We find that the college has a debt of \$2,600. The income from the invested funds is about \$8,200. The college possesses several buildings, well suited for the purposes for which they were constructed, viz: dormitories and recitation rooms; and it also has a small library and a limited amount of apparatus; in addition it has several good houses for the accommodation of the professors, a fine farm house, and a good barn, built at an expense of \$10,000.

A glance at the catalogue shows that the Trustees have laid out a very broad course of study. It includes not only those branches pertaining directly to agriculture and the mechanic arts, but, also, the French language, the German language, astronomy, logic, calculus, physics, &c. This course of instruction is divided into four courses, thereby increasing the amount of labor done by the professors, and requiring a greater number of instructors. We believe the instruction given as thorough as could be expected under the circumstances, and that the instructors as a body are earnest, faithful men. Facilities for requiring practice in vice work (filing and fitting) and forge work are afforded by the work-shops connected with the college. A few of the students avail themselves of the opportunities thus offered, and spend during the course 122 hours in each shop. The work exhibited indicated considerable progress. Some experiments have been made in agriculture, but it is impossible for us to give the number or the results. During the Freshman year the students work to some extent, in the afternoon, on the farm, and receive pay therefor. The amount paid out during the past year for such labor was \$467.33. Such, in brief, is the kind and amount of instruction given at the College of Agri-

culture and Mechanic Arts, and what has been its influence upon the agricultural and mechanical interests of the State?

According to the catalogue, 119 pupils have graduated during the years 1872 and 1879, inclusive; of these 15 are farmers, 28 teachers, 12 engineers, 5 machinists, and the rest are apothecaries, mechanics, editors, lawyers, book-agents, dentists, book-keepers, doctors, manufacturers, &c., &c. These facts answer, we think, the above question. The expense of educating the students deserves a passing notice. Comparing the number graduated with the expense of maintaining the institution, it will be seen that the cost of educating each student has been large, probably more than it will be in the future, yet we cannot reasonably expect, unless the number of students should greatly multiply, that the expense will be materially lessened. The Trustees estimate that they can carry on the college, by using the strictest economy, on an annual appropriation of about \$5,000; but to carry on the College in accordance with the present plan, to erect new work-shops, to increase the library, to purchase philosophical and chemical apparatus, and to conduct the experiments properly, it is evident they will need a much larger sum. While the citizens of the State will not probably object to the annual appropriation of even a larger sum than five thousand dollars, if that should be deemed necessary to stimulate the agricultural and mechanical industries of the State, they will not, in the view of the Committee, approve of such an expenditure, if its object is merely to provide for such a course of literary and classical education as may be obtained quite as well elsewhere, without involving expense to the State and the consequent increase of taxation.

In view of all these facts the committee are unanimously of the opinion that the only true policy for the Institution to pursue is to limit its course of instruction to branches of study more nearly related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, even if they are compelled to omit French and German and the higher mathematics, to charge tuition for instruction, and to limit their expenditures to their income.

STATE OF MAINE.

In HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
March 3, 1880. }

Reported by Mr. SPRINGER for Committees on Education and
Agriculture, and ordered printed on his motion.

ORAMANDAL SMITH, *Clerk.*