

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Sixty-Ninth Legislature.

SENATE.

No. 2.

STATE OF MAINE.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
AUGUSTA, January 12, 1899.

*To the Honorable President of the Senate and Speaker of the
House of Representatives:*

I have the honor to transmit herewith the report of the Commissioners appointed by the Governor, by authority of an order of the last Legislature, to investigate and ascertain as to the desirability of establishing new normal schools in eastern or central Maine, with a bill for the expenses of same, accompanying.

LLEWELLYN POWERS.

STATE OF MAINE.

REPORT OF COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE
GOVERNOR TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT
UPON THE ADVISABILITY OF ESTABLISHING
ADDITIONAL STATE NORMAL SCHOOLS.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:

There has been for several years past, in the eastern and central sections of the State, a strong public sentiment, favoring the establishment of additional State normal schools. The desire of the people in those sections has been made known, among other ways, by numerous petitions to the State legislature. These petitions have been signed by the most influential citizens of those localities, and by a large majority of the people in those parts of the State which are specially interested in the matter. In response to these petitions, the legislature of A. D., 1897, passed the following order:

“Ordered: That there shall be appointed by the Governor, with the consent of the executive council, a commission, whose duty it shall be to ascertain as to the desirability of establishing new normal schools in eastern or central Maine, and the most advantageous place for said schools.

Said commissioners shall report their doings to the next legislature, and serve without pay, except that they shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred.”

The commissioners appointed in accordance with the above order have given the subject careful and extended consideration and report as follows:

In order to obtain a full and complete understanding of the subject submitted for our consideration, we have visited the normal schools already existing in the State, and also those sections which are asking for normal school privileges. A glance at the map of Maine will show that our three normal schools, located at Gorham, Farmington and Castine, are all in the southern and

western parts of the State, leaving central and eastern Maine completely without accommodation in this respect.

We commenced our work the first of August, 1898. As the normal schools were not then in session, we began our investigation by visiting those sections of the State which have been petitioning for new schools. We found the people in these localities thoroughly interested and very much in earnest in this matter. We were kindly received and given assistance in our investigations whenever opportunity offered.

We first visited Calais. This little city, situated in the eastern part of Washington county near the mouth of the St. Croix river, has a population of about eight thousand. It is within easy reach of the other towns of the county, and will soon be more closely connected by the new railroad in that part of the State, which is nearing completion. In the city itself there are about sixteen hundred pupils who attend school, and thirty-seven schools, employing thirty-eight teachers. The city high school furnishes a course of four years, fits for any college, and turns out a class of about twenty each year. In the estimation of good judges living in that vicinity, this field, taken in connection with the surrounding country, would furnish a normal school with at least one hundred pupils at the start. The nearest normal school is about one hundred miles from Calais in a direct line, but much farther away by any of the routes of travel. At Calais, we were especially indebted for assistance in getting at facts, to the mayor, Hon. Charles E. Swan; Rev. A. J. Padelford, a member of the school board; and Stephen E. Webber, M. D., Superintendent of Schools. The following letter from Mayor Swan to the secretary of this commission, in which are embodied resolutions passed at a meeting of the citizens of Calais called to consider this subject, will tend to show the interest which is taken in this matter in that part of the State.

CALAIS, ME., NOV. 18, 1898.

A. R. HAWKES, ESQ., Secretary,

DEAR SIR: At a public meeting of the citizens of Calais, legally called by the mayor for November 17th, to consider the establishment of a State normal school in this city, there was a good attendance of our most responsible citizens, who, after a full discussion of the subject in all its bearings, enthusiastically and unanimously adopted the following resolutions, viz:

Resolved: First, that it is the sense of this meeting, that the city of Calais by its location, situated as it is on the banks of the St. Croix, having its natural drainage supplemented by an improved system of sewerage; having a complete system of water works, electric street cars, convenient steamboat and railroad connections, a large public library, and other improvements superior to any other city of its size in the State; possesses unexcelled advantages for the location of the proposed school for eastern Maine.

Second, That it is the sense of this meeting that five thousand dollars be raised by popular subscription and offered to the State, to be used toward the erection of the proposed normal school building.

Third, That a committee of three be appointed by the mayor to solicit subscriptions for this purpose."

Hon. M. N. McKusick, W. C. Renne and Ashley St. Clair, Esq., were appointed such committee, and at once entered actively upon the performance of their duties.

From the great interest exhibited at this meeting and that expressed generally by our citizens, as to the desirability of having such an educational institution located here, and their willingness to contribute personally to that effect, I feel authorized to say, that if the legislature will locate the school with us, the city of Calais will readily respond, in aid of construction, to the amount above indicated.

Respectfully yours,

CHAS. E. SWAN, *Mayor.*

In the large county of Aroostook, which is practically without normal school advantages, we visited two localities, Houlton and Presque Isle, each of which places has been spoken of as a proper site for a school of this kind. We stopped first at Houlton. This town is situated on the B. & A. R. R., is the shire town and business center of Aroostook county, and is easy of access to all of the surrounding country, the village having a service of twenty trains a day. The population of the town is nearly five thousand, and it has over nine hundred pupils who attend school, two-thirds of whom are in the village. They are unable to procure normal school teachers, and supply their schools by a species of promotion, starting the beginners in the outlying districts and gradually working them into the village schools; a method we feel compelled to say we cannot approve. There are ten school buildings and the town employs twenty-one teachers. By arrangement between the town and Ricker Classical Institute, the high school pupils of this place attend that institution. The town pays to the Institute for this privilege, \$22 a year for each pupil, and furnishes to that school from eighty to eighty-five students. If a normal school were established at this place, board could be obtained for from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per week, and the village could accommodate one hundred and fifty students. The people of this place would not favor the dormitory system. We have satisfactory and reliable assurances, that the citizens of Houlton are ready to do all in this matter that will be required or expected. We have guarantees from responsible citizens of that town, that Houlton will provide a suitable lot, build a proper foundation for a normal school building on same, and connect it with the city water works.

After leaving Houlton, we visited Presque Isle, a very pleasant and thriving little village on the B. & A. R. R., about forty miles northward from Houlton. It has a smaller population than Houlton and is not so well accommodated with train service. Presque Isle has more than eight hundred pupils that attend school, twenty-three school buildings, and the town employs twenty-three teachers. It also expends over \$1,700 annually upon its high school, which provides three distinct courses and fits its pupils for college.

Whenever a normal school shall be located in the central part of the State, the general consensus of opinion seems to point to

Dexter as the proper place. It is so situated that it would accommodate three counties, Penobscot, Piscataquis and Somerset. Its schools show an average attendance of about seven hundred. There are, in the town, eighteen schools of various grades, and a high school that fits for college. The cost of the latter is about \$1,500 per year. Board could be obtained for students at this place for from \$2 to \$2.50 per week, and the citizens would prefer private boarding to a dormitory. The people of this place and of the surrounding towns, are intensely interested in the subject, and are hopeful of securing favorable consideration of their request for a training school. The following letter which the commission received from Hon. Stanley Plummer, illustrates the enterprising manner in which Dexter citizens are ready to take hold of this proposition :

DEXTER, Oct. 30, 1898.

A. R. HAWKES, ESQ.,

Secretary Normal School Commission, North Gorham, Me.

DEAR SIR: In answer to your letter of the 26th ultimo, requesting information as to how much the people of this town will do in the way of furnishing grounds, water and sewerage for normal school buildings, permit me to say that individual citizens have already pledged \$2,500 for this purpose. This amount will secure the splendid lot of two and one-eighth acres, on High street, near my residence, and provide for sewerage and an ample supply of pure water from springs at least 125 feet higher than the surface of the lot.

As an additional inducement I will give \$1,000 for the purpose of providing a school library and apparatus.

Besides, the town, in its corporate capacity will, I am sure, meet any reasonable requirement of the State in the matter, and if necessary, the amount of individual subscriptions can be largely increased.

I received pledges for the above stated \$3,500 in one day and several of our wealthiest citizens are away from home and could not be approached. At this stage of the matter I only sought to make certain the contribution of a sum sufficient to provide the lot, water, sewerage and the library. If preferable, Mr. Wm. H. Abbott will donate a fine lot on Lakeview avenue, so situated

that it can be easily drained and supplied with spring water, and leave the money pledged to pay for the High street lot, to be used for other purposes.

Yours very truly,

STANLEY PLUMMER,

for himself and divers citizens of Dexter.

We wish to express our appreciation of the courteous manner in which aid was rendered us in our work, by the principals of the State normal schools at Farmington, Gorham and Castine, during our visits to those institutions. We found the schools in these three places well filled with students and doing excellent work.

It has been proposed, that instead of increasing the number of normal schools, the standard of admission be raised. After a careful consideration of the matter, we are unable to agree with this proposition. We believe that the principals of those schools are in the positions to be the better judges of the fitness of pupils who present themselves for admission. The fact that we found school officers throughout the State willing to pay normal graduates two dollars per week more than other teachers, and that they prefer them even at this difference in price, proves that the normal schools have been doing good work in the past. We quote with our marked approval, the following remarks from the National Educational Association's Report on Rural Schools. (1897.)

"The normal school system was first devised especially for the benefit of the rural schools. The normal school is often removed still further from those who would teach in rural schools, by the tendency to raise the standard of admission to the requirements of a high school course. The fact that most of the towns of the State have a high school is no proof that all of those who will teach in rural schools can go through a high school course of three or four years, and then a normal course of two or three years. Great care should be taken that the normal school does not get too far from those whom it was especially set to serve."

We believe that the above words apply with special force to the conditions in our own State, where we have always looked to the country towns for our best teachers. Furthermore, it

should be remembered that the normal schools are a part of the common school system; and that money taken from them and devoted to higher institutions of learning, is so much money taken from the common schools.

It has been proposed that the State furnish transportation to students in those parts of Maine which are deprived of normal school privileges. But we found this scheme far from feasible, the strongest opposition coming from the parents. The majority of the teachers throughout the State are young ladies, therefore the larger percentage of the normal school students are of the same sex; and the mothers object very strongly to any proposition to take their daughters long distances from home, and away from their care, at a comparatively tender age. We made many inquiries, and in every instance, were informed that free transportation would be no inducement whatever. Experience has proven, that while the normal school is supported by the State and is a State institution, it is necessarily a local school and draws its attendance principally from its own locality.

Toward the close of our labor on this question, we attended, by invitation, a meeting of the State Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Stetson, and the Board of Normal School Trustees. At this meeting, we got much important information that we could have obtained in no other way. Mr. Stetson stated to the commissioners, that while he strongly favors the employment of trained teachers, and is desirous of having in the schools of the State as large a representation of normal graduates as it is possible to obtain, and while it would be well if we could supply all of our schools with trained teachers; that at present only thirteen per cent of our teachers are normal graduates. With the present number of normal schools, allowing the same rate of gain in the future that there has been in the past, (and provided that none of the graduates die or get married,) we can supply our schools with normal teachers in about two hundred years. The greatest number of normal teachers, we found in any one town was eight, and of these not all were graduates, some having begun but not having finished the normal course.

It has been thought by some that the establishment of new schools would draw from the attendance of the old, but we believe that it would have the contrary effect. It has been found

in Massachusetts that each normal school draws its pupils principally from the county in which it is situated, and we think, that except in cases where a school is located near the border of two or more counties, the same is true in this State. We are of the opinion that if additional schools are established, not only will the new field take care of the added schools, but the stimulus to interest in educational matters, will be an instant and appreciable aid to the old schools. And in our mother State they have found by experience that such is the case. Previous to 1895, Massachusetts had six normal schools. Since that year she has added four new ones. The result was that the new school were filled and at the same time there was a larger attendance in each of the old schools.

The following is from the Massachusetts school report for the years 1895-97 (page 181) on this point :

“A part of this astonishing increase is due to the opening of the new schools, in each of whose cases the attendance is larger than was anticipated ; but what is a surprising feature of the situation, the old schools, instead of being depleted by the opening of the new, have, without exception, larger classes than last year, the junior class at Bridgewater having increased from 115 to 125 ; at Framingham, from 37 to 52 ; at Salem, from 42 to 75 ; at Westfield, from 37 to 69 ; and at Worcester, from 59 to 72.”

One objection sometimes urged against establishing more normal schools in Maine, is that after receiving an educational training in the schools of our own State, our teachers leave us and go to other states, where they command higher salaries. It seems to us that it would be poor policy to stop educating our children, because when educated they were enabled to fill better paying positions, even though they leave the State of Maine to find them. We think, that if we must keep our children ignorant and incompetent in order to compel them to stay at home, that it will be more to our and their interests to prepare them for future usefulness, and then if they are bound to leave us to become teachers, professors, law-makers and governors of other states, we must let them go. In the year 1897, Maine had one-half as many teachers as Massachusetts, but only one-fifth as many normal graduates. Massachusetts has expended more than \$2,000,000 in providing normal school buildings, and it

annually costs that state over \$200,000 to run her ten normal schools. Maine has at the present time, normal school property valued at \$192,500, which is located as follows: Castine, \$55,000, Farmington, \$60,000, and Gorham, \$77,500, (see report of Superintendent Stetson for 1897, page 126.) The yearly expense of running these three schools is about \$30,000. Thus, while Maine has one-third as many pupils as the mother state, we have appropriated less than one-tenth as much money for normal school buildings, and are spending less than one-sixth as much annually for training teachers. In comparing Maine and Massachusetts, it should be borne in mind, that while Massachusetts has a much larger population, a much larger per cent of Maine's pupils come from the country districts, which always furnish more teachers than the same population in manufacturing centers. It must also be remembered that the populated territory of Maine exceeds, more than three times, the whole area of Massachusetts; and as we have demonstrated, one of these schools accommodates only the vicinity in which it is located.

We believe that it is generally agreed, without argument, that normal schools are necessary in order to have good common schools; that teachers should have some preparation for their work other than mere acquaintance with the subject matter to be taught; that there are large sections of Maine without proper opportunities for training teachers; in brief, that the State needs more normal schools.

The only question now to be met is the matter of expense. The buildings for our three schools already established, have as we have seen, cost the State, on an average, about \$65,000 for each school, more having been expended on some and less on others. Our observation teaches us that a larger expenditure of money on buildings does not necessarily insure a better school; and that of the three, the school where the least money has been spent is doing as good work as either of the others.

As our report shows, sufficient contributions would be obtained from either of the places mentioned, to provide a fine lot, large enough to secure buildings against danger from fire from without, and to furnish a foundation ready for the building, including sewerage and an abundant supply of pure water. Upon such a foundation, can be constructed an appropriate, substantial

wooden building, slate roofed and with outer walls double plastered; finished, furnished and equipped inside as well as any of our present normal school buildings (and for the purpose for which it is intended) equal to any school building in the State, for the sum of \$25,000. This we believe should be the purpose of the State, to furnish good and appropriate school buildings, not to erect expensive structures for the purpose of ornamenting the town or city where they are located. We have discussed this subject with the people living in those sections which need more schools, and are able to assert, that they would be fully satisfied with buildings such as we describe above. Thus, buildings for three new schools, supplying fully the needs of eastern and central Maine, would cost the State only an amount equal to what has been expended on the buildings of a single one of the old schools.

As to location, we believe that three of those places visited by the commission, viz: Calais, Houlton and Dexter, are the best situated to accommodate the greatest number of students, and after considering the subject in all its phases, we conclude that no better sites could be selected. It will be seen by reference to the map, that normal schools located at these three places, together with the existing schools, would cover the entire field.

Therefore your commissioners, after going carefully over the whole ground, and examining the subject thoroughly and conscientiously; and after weighing the opinions of citizens, teachers and school officers throughout the State, and comparing them with present facts and past history, are convinced that the best interests of our schools and of the whole State, demand that three additional State normal schools shall be established, and located at the sites above recommended. But the whole to be carried out with the assistance and co-operation of the towns where the schools may be established; and in the economical and prudent manner indicated; and at an expense to the State not to exceed \$25,000 for each school.

Respectfully submitted,
FREDERICK S. WALLS,
JOHN HARPER,
ALBERT R. HAWKES.

DECEMBER, 1898.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, January 12, 1899.

On motion by Mr. BLANCHARD of Franklin, laid on table to be printed, pending reference.

KENDALL M. DUNBAR, *Secretary*.