

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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EIGHTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE

HOUSE

NO. 215

House of Representatives, Feb. 28, 1923.

Reported by Mr. Leland from Committee on Agriculture and ordered printed under joint rules.

CLYDE R. CHAPMAN, Clerk.

Presented by Mr. Leland of Sangerville.

STATE OF MAINE

**IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THREE**

**RESOLVE, Making Appropriation for the Support and
Maintenance of the State Experiment Station.**

Resolved: That there be and hereby is appropriated the
2 sum of nine thousand five hundred dollars for the year
3 nineteen hundred twenty-four and seventeen thousand dol-
4 lars for the year nineteen hundred twenty-five to be ex-
5 pended under the direction of the Maine agricultural ex-
6 periment station for supplementing and making more effec-
7 tive the work now being carried on by said station under
8 the federal grant known as the Hatch act.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

Regarding the Needs of the Maine Agricultural Experiment Station

The experimental work of the station concerns problems that usually take several years for their final solution. Many of these problems are of such a nature that they cannot be discontinued even temporarily without partial or complete loss of the progress already attained. Much of the work now going on was started under pre-war conditions.

It has been necessary to carry on the work of the past five years on the same appropriations as in 1917 and previous. Economic conditions during this period have been such as to materially reduce this income in effect. The purchasing price of the dollar has decreased materially. The result has been that regression and curtailment has been necessary. The station has had to retrench until it has reached the condition in which it was approximately 15 or 20 years ago. The majority of other experiment stations have at least been given sufficient support by their states to enable them to hold their own. The appropriation below specified is **not for expansion** but for a **return** to a pre-war basis.

The station staff has been reduced one-third and the number of persons giving full time to investigation work has been reduced nearly one-half in the past 5 years. Every bit of the field work of the two experimental farms that could be dropped or temporarily abandoned has been discontinued in an attempt to live within the present income. The productive work of the institution is, as a result, falling off very rapidly, yet the calls for information and for assistance upon fundamental and practical lines are increasing. It is upon work of that nature done by this and kindred institutions that our present efficient system of Agricultural Extension of this country is based. The work of the station investigator is to produce the goods, while the extension man markets the product and makes it available to the practical farmer. Hence, if station productivity slows down or fails to function practical agriculture suffers in like measure.

The majority of the funds now used for investigation work, which in most states have been quite liberally supplemented by states themselves, are supplied by the federal government. It was plainly the intention of congress that the several states should provide the necessary land and buildings and their maintenance for the stations and that the funds provided by the federal government are in the nature of an endowment to be used solely for research or laboratory work and not for general overhead expenses. In fact federal regulations largely prohibit the use of government funds for the last mentioned purpose.

The work of the station is supervised by the station council. In the council membership, in addition to three members of the board of trustees of the university, the president of the university, the dean of the college of agriculture and the commissioner of agriculture of the state, are included representatives chosen by the state grange, the state pomological society, the state dairymen's association, Maine livestock breeders' association and the Maine seed improvement association. No work is undertaken by the station without the approval of the council and much of it is undertaken at the request of the representatives of the various state-wide agricultural societies.

At the last regular meeting of the station council a committee consisting of Mr. F. P. Washburn, commissioner of agriculture and Mr. W. G. Hunton, representing the Maine seed improvement association, was appointed to make a thorough investigation of the present status of the station's work and to determine what additional financial support is necessary to bring it back to its previous efficiency, and to report to the board of trustees of the university. In their report they recommended that in addition to the present appropriations now received by the station provision should be made for general maintenance, for replacement of members of the staff who have resigned or left the station's employ and whose places have not been filled and for general emergency work upon special agricultural problems which frequently arise in various parts of the state and require special attention. For these three items they recommended \$9,500 for the fiscal year 1923-24 and \$17,000 for the fiscal year 1924-25.