

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

EIGHTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

House Document

No. 326

H. P. 1022. House of Representatives, Feb. 8, 1929.

Referred to Committee on Library and 500 copies ordered printed. Sent up for concurrence.

CLYDE R. CHAPMAN, Clerk.

Presented by Mr. Foster of Ellsworth.

STATE OF MAINE

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

RESOLVE, in Favor of a Maine State Library Building.

Resolved: That a suitable building for the Maine state
2 library be erected, and that the governor of the state and
3 four others to be appointed by him, are hereby constituted
4 a commission and are directed to take immediate steps to
5 obtain plans and specifications for such a building; that it
6 be erected convenient to the capitol building and in a style
7 of architecture harmonious with it; that it be so construct-
8 ed as to house all the material belonging to the library at
9 the present time and allow for normal growth; that said
10 commission shall proceed to contract for, prosecute and

11 superintend the construction and completion of said build-
12 ing; that the sum of five hundred thousand dollars be and
13 hereby is appropriated for said building, and that two hun-
14 dred fifty thousand dollars be transferred from a surplus
15 revenue of the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen
16 hundred and twenty-nine, and two hundred fifty thousand
17 dollars be transferred from a surplus revenue of the fiscal
18 year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and thirty;
19 that said funds be expended under the direction of said
20 commission, and for the reasonable expenses of said com-
21 mission, as provided by sections twenty-five and twenty-six
22 of chapter two of the revised statutes. Provided, however,
23 that said commission shall not proceed to make any expen-
24 diture or contract therefor, until they shall have first ob-
25 tained a contract or contracts from responsible parties to
26 build and complete the necessary fire-proof building, which
27 contract shall be secured by a bond to be approved by a
28 majority of this commission.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The great need of the library is a building to house properly the 180,000 volumes now the property of the state, to care for the 200,000 volumes that will be added to the library in the next fifty years, and to furnish facilities for the people who use the library.

With available space in the present quarters filled to capacity, with more than half its books stored in locations not easily accessible, with a collection growing rapidly in size and increasing in usefulness each year, the library has come to the point where its efficiency is vitally impaired. Various other considerations are pointing in the same direction. The legislature and state departments need more space which the vacating of the library quarters would give them.

The large and increasing value of its books and other property make desirable the housing of the library in a building more carefully safeguarded against fire than the capitol can be with the multiplicity of offices and accumulation of inflammable material, while the enormous weight of the books is a special reason why they be stored in a building structurally suited for their handling, care and preservation.

We have in Maine conditions which are peculiar to agricultural states, an area sparsely settled with no big cities, no large endowments to gather collections of books. There are three hundred towns without libraries; at least 400,000 Maine people must depend on the state library for their books, especially for technical works dealing with business and manufacture. The state library is the only large library in the state to which citizens can go to find information on all subjects. In the last two years the people of Maine have received nearly 100,000 books from the state library. Present conditions indicate that the small towns are not likely to find it possible to finance local libraries.

The state library does not purchase fiction except for traveling libraries. Only worth-while and informational books are added to the collection. The state library service today supplements the various college, school and public libraries in the state. It is first a reference and research library, its contents primarily educational. The facilities for original study

could not be in every library ; or, if possible, would not be wise economy. The state library is also a statutory depository of the valuable United States documents and bulletins, but lack of space prevents their full use.

A state library building should be located near the state house and so constructed as to house all the material belonging to it for a considerable period of years to come, and yet planned to allow extension in the future without destroying the proportions.