

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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EIGHTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 470

S. P. 396

In Senate, Feb. 11, 1931.

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

ROYDEN V. BROWN, Secretary.

Presented by Senator Crockett of York.

STATE OF MAINE

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

RESOLVE in Favor of the State Library.

Whereas the present space occupied by the state library is wholly inadequate for its necessary activities, and in view of the fact that the space for books is entirely exhausted, and

Whereas, the building of a state library building will release adequate space that is needed for other state departments and legislative committees, therefore be it

Resolved, that the governor and council are hereby directed to take immediate steps to obtain plans and specifications for such enlargement and alteration of the present state house, or in their discretion, for such alteration of the present state house and construction of such a building adjacent and convenient thereto, and in a style of architecture harmonious therewith, as will provide ample, convenient and fire-proof apartments for the state library, and the records and documents of the state, and to allow for normal growth; and a sum not to exceed ten thousand dollars is hereby appropriated for the expense of such plans and specifications; said appropriation shall not lapse but shall be carried over from year to year until the plans and specifications are completed and paid for; and the governor and council are hereby authorized and empowered to contract for, prosecute and superintend the construction and completion of said alteration or new building at a total cost not in excess of five hundred thous-

and dollars at such time as there is a sufficient surplus of revenue available; said sum to be expended under the direction of the governor and council; and which sum is hereby appropriated for the cost of such enlargement, alteration and construction under the circumstances aforesaid, provided, that such expenditures shall be made in accordance with the provisions of sections thirty-two and thirty-three of chapter two of the revised statutes, and the said appropriation shall not lapse but shall be carried over from year to year until the said enlargement, alteration or construction is completed and paid for.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The great need of the library is a building to house properly the 195,000 volumes now the property of the state, to care for the books 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 year by 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 should be stored in a building structurally suited to 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 297 towns without libraries; at least 400,000 people must depend on the state library for their books, especially for technical books 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 more than 200,000 books from the state library.

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.

The state library building should be a part of, or located near, the state house and so constructed as to house all the material belonging to it and provide for future growth.