

1911

Hearings Before the Subcommittee No.2 of the
Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, House
of Representatives, Friday, May 12, 1911 on H.R.
8766 (by Mr. Guernsey) Providing for the
Purchase of a Site and the Erection of a Building
Thereon at Bangor, Maine

United States House of Representatives

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No. 1

HEARINGS

BEFORE

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 2

OF THE

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE

*U. S. Congress. House. Public building
and grounds committee*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

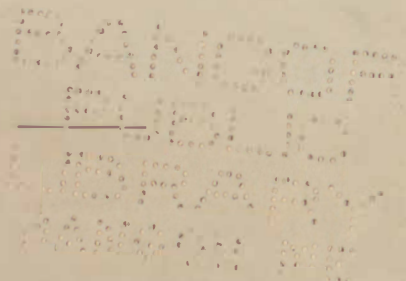
FRIDAY, MAY 12, 1911

ON

H. R. 8766

(BY MR. GUERNSEY)

PROVIDING FOR THE PURCHASE OF A SITE AND
THE ERECTION OF A BUILDING THEREON
AT BANGOR, ME.



COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[Committee room, room 277, House Office Building. Telephone 562. Meets Friday.]

MORRIS SHEPPARD, *Chairman*, of Texas.

JOHN L. BURNETT, of Alabama.

EDWIN S. UNDERHILL, of New York.

FRANK CLARK, of Florida.

JOHN E. ANDRUS, of New York.

JAMES C. CANTRILL, of Kentucky.

RICHARD W. AUSTIN, of Tennessee.

S. A. RODDENBERRY, of Georgia.

JOHN M. NELSON, of Wisconsin.

CARTER GLASS, of Virginia.

BURTON L. FRENCH, of Idaho.

WILLIAM A. ASHBROOK, of Ohio.

HORACE M. TOWNER, of Iowa.

HENRY A. BARNHART, of Indiana.

IRA C. COPLEY, of Illinois.

JAMES M. GUDGER, of North Carolina.

JESSE L. HARTMAN, of Pennsylvania.

FRANK P. LOCKHART, *Clerk*.

ROOM 277
CLARK
YANKEE
IN ROOM

PUBLIC BUILDING, BANGOR, ME.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, SUBCOMMITTEE No. 2,

Washington, D. C., Friday, May 12, 1911.

The subcommittee this day met, Hon. John L. Burnett (chairman) presiding.

Mr. BURNETT. I will first read to the committee a communication from the Secretary of the Treasury to the chairman of this committee. I asked Mr. Sheppard to write to the Secretary for information and he sends this in response to that request:

HON. MORRIS SHEPPARD,

*Chairman Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,
House of Representatives, United States.*

SIR: In response to your request, I have the honor to inclose herewith copy of a report of the 9th instant, submitted by a representative of the department as the result of his investigation of the post office and customhouse, Bangor, Me., damaged by the recent fire, together with sketch and photographs which accompanied the same.

Respectfully,

FRANKLIN MACVEAGH, *Secretary.*

Now, then, the report is as follows:

BANGOR, ME., *May 9, 1911.*

SUPERVISING ARCHITECT, *Washington, D. C.*

SIR: In accordance with office telegram of May 6, 1911, directing a report of the fire damage to the United States post office and customhouse, Bangor, Me., I have to submit that the building and contents, with exception of foundation and heating plant, is a total loss. If reconstruction is contemplated on the present site the walls will have to be taken down to grade level. On the east and north sides, where the fire was most severe, the granite facing is spawled off almost to the backing, and likewise at openings on the south and west sides. The original building, built in 1856, was extended to the south in 1869 and to the north in 1904. In the last extension the roof and floor were of wood supported by steel girders, and nothing remains on the walls except the roof girders. The floor construction of the earlier extension was of steel beams supporting brick arches, and the roof of wood supported by steel trusses. The roof, all but a small portion of the third floor, and about one-half of the second floor have collapsed. The floor construction of the original building was of groined brick arches supported by interior brick walls. The roof was of wood, and with the second and third floors collapsed. The arches of the first floor and supporting walls in basement are badly damaged and in a dangerous condition. All interior brick walls, the north wall of the original building, and portions of the backing on all exterior walls are disintegrated by the heat, badly cracked and sprung and should be wrecked immediately. The basement walls of the original building and recent extension are badly damaged, but in the extension of 1869 the damage is slight and the heating plant located therein is apparently unharmed. Floor plans showing structural damage are inclosed herewith, also photographs of the exterior. Estimated cost of wrecking the building and moving debris \$6,000. Custodian Day has provided what protection was possible from means at hand, but in accordance with telegram of even date I recommended, in view of the dangerous condition of the ruins, that the custodian be authorized to fence off the property and provide warning signs to prevent trespass until action can be taken toward wrecking the walls.

Respectfully,

A. W. GRIFFIN, *Superintendent.*

Now, he furnishes us with diagrams and also photographs which show just about, as he says, an almost total destruction. Gentlemen, I have invited Senator Johnson of Maine to be present to-day, and, Senator, I hope you will feel free to make any suggestions or ask any questions you see fit during the course of the hearing. Now, Mr. Guernsey, how do you desire to present the case?

Mr. GUERNSEY. I would like to have Mayor Mullen address the committee, and he is here to answer some of the questions that I was unable to answer at the hearing last Saturday.

Mr. BURNETT. We will be glad to hear Mr. Mullen.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES W. MULLÉN, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF BANGOR, ME.

Mr. MULLEN. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, the loss we have sustained down in Bangor is a very severe one, and it is one that we can not recover from immediately. Among others, of course, the Government has sustained the loss of its building. That was built, I understand from the reading just now, two years before I was born, and the business of Bangor and the business of the post office and customhouse has changed so much in all of that time that we down there know that the lot upon which it could be rebuilt is entirely inadequate for the purposes of the post office and the customhouse, and that it would be impossible to construct a building thereon that would give the people the service they are entitled to in relation to their mail matter. And in addition to that, the people of Bangor, who are scorched and discouraged, wish to know what action the Government is going to take in relation to reproducing its building, and, if it please you, Mr. Chairman, they want to know, if possible, that is, as soon as it is possible for you to let them know, what action you intend to take in relation to the rebuilding of your property there.

Now, you are located at the present time, or at least the post office is located, in the Young Men's Christian Association Building, in very cramped quarters, and the customs department is located—I do not know where they are located, but Mr. Day can tell you.

Mr. DAY. They are located in a building which is entirely inadequate; the best I could do was to hire some small rooms.

Mr. MULLEN. There are no available places, as our best buildings were burned. Of course, a lot of poor buildings were burned; but the very best buildings we had in town and the most modern, such buildings as the Sterns Building, completed only two years ago, I think, and the Morse-Oliver Building, which was built about six or seven years ago.

Mr. TOWNER. What can you offer by way of a site?

Mr. MULLEN. Now, in relation to that, I do not know that I would want to suggest a site; but there are any number of sites to be had there to-day, and the one thing that we feel down there is that the Government should select its site now, if it is going to select, and while there is nothing to hinder selecting whatever it wants, there are any number of corners there and any number of lots. I do not myself advocate any man's property, because it might seem as though I had an interest in doing that.

Mr. BURNETT. We would not expect that, because the Government will make its own selection. Mr. Towner wants to know about a site in the good business section of the town.

Mr. MULLEN. Now, in relation to the size of the city of Bangor we are of about 25,000 people, and you know that right across the river from us we have 12,000 more, which is the city of Brewer, which is practically a part of Bangor, merely a substation, as you might call it.

Mr. BURNETT. Do they have a separate post office over there?

Mr. MULLEN. No, sir; I think it is all done in the Bangor post office.

Mr. ANDRUS. There is no substation there at all?

Mr. MULLEN. There is a substation of the Bangor office in Brewer, but the business is done through the Bangor office.

Mr. ANDRUS. Now, just for information. This post office is midway between those two places, is it?

Mr. MULLEN. No, not at all, sir; the Penobscot River divides Bangor and Brewer, while this post office is on the Kenduskeag stream. If you will look at the map right before you, you will see that this is the Kenduskeag stream and this is the Penobscot River, and Brewer would be right there [indicating on map].

Mr. ANDRUS. Is it your idea to erect a post office at Bangor that will supply the needs, wishes, and requirements of the city on the other side of the river?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, I suppose they would be supplied over there as they are now supplied.

Mr. ANDRUS. Then if it should be provided that the new building should be erected nearer the Penobscot River than the old site is that would be some encouragement to them, would it not?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, I do not know that it would make very much difference; the mail all comes into the Maine Central station, in the Union Station there, and I suppose it depends on how near you get to that railroad.

Mr. ANDRUS. In other words, the people on the other side of the river are thoroughly in accord with you gentlemen in regard to selecting a new site for the post office, and it is agreeable to them? They do not propose to come in later and ask for another site?

Mr. MULLEN. That will be perfectly agreeable to the Brewer people, so far as I know; I have not heard anything different from that.

Mr. ANDRUS. Can you give us any idea of the values of property?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, now, I can tell you an instance, but before I do that I want to explain to you that Bangor is a town in a valley; that Bangor is a port and vessels of heavy draft can come clear up to the city; the hills go up on the sides pretty fast. Now, that has had a tendency to keep the business down close to the river, in the river valley, and in the valley of this Kenduskeag stream, and has always had a tendency to make property pretty high down there. Now, just to illustrate: Right opposite the city hall in Bangor it was proposed to build a public library, and the people who owned it would not agree with the city officials. This was before I was a city official. They could not agree on a price and so the city condemned, or undertook to condemn, the property; the city brought proceedings to condemn that property for the purpose of building upon it a public library and also to take a part of it for a street to

widen a street. That plat of land was 130 feet, I think, by 300 feet, and that is up on quite an elevation and right opposite the city hall; it is not in the part that you would call the actual business part or portion of the town.

Mr. ANDRUS. How near is that to the depot?

Mr. MULLEN. That is 3,000 feet, and it is 1,000 feet, probably, farther off than the old post office—or 700 or 800 feet. The price that that was condemned at was \$75,000, \$45,000 for the part that was to be taken for the library and \$30,000 that was going to be taken for the street; \$30,000 was paid and accepted, but the \$45,000 was refused, and the condemnation proceedings failed because the price was not large enough. I am only giving you that as an illustration to show that property has always been pretty high in the valley of the river there.

Mr. BURNETT. That was before the destruction by fire, though?

Mr. MULLEN. That was three years ago.

Mr. BURNETT. Would not that business property be cheaper now, since the business part of the town has been destroyed?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, that is the way it would seem to me—that you could select a site there and get just what you wanted at what we would call down there a very reasonable price.

Mr. ANDRUS. In other words, the people have civic pride enough to offer the Government a site cheaper than they would offer it to an individual?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, I do not know as to that, but the spirit of loyalty down there and civic pride is predominating to-day.

Mr. BURNETT. The changed conditions would make all properties cheaper than before?

Mr. MULLEN. I think so.

Mr. TOWNER. Is there not some site, or are there not sites, that perhaps would not be the most high-priced on account of their business position, for instance, in a part that would be most desirable for the retail trade or something of that sort, but nevertheless be very conveniently located on the corner of good streets, a good location that the Government could secure?

Mr. MULLEN. And not get further from the station than the old one was?

Mr. TOWNER. Yes, sir.

Mr. MULLEN. No, sir; there is no such site. You must take the old site if you want it nearer to the station.

Mr. ANDRUS. Do you remember the distance of the old post office from the depot?

Mr. MULLEN. About 1,600 feet.

Mr. ANDRUS. Do you know whether there is an added charge for the carrying of mail a distance exceeding 1,320 feet?

Mr. MULLEN. That I can not say.

Mr. ANDRUS. Is there any additional charge for transporting the mail beyond 1,320 feet?

Mr. DAY. That I can not answer; but I do not think so. That question I can not answer, as to whether there is an additional charge. My judgment would be that there is not; but I do not know.

Mr. BURNETT. Was all of the property between the railroad station and the post-office site destroyed?

Mr. MULLEN. No, sir; not all of that district destroyed.

Mr. TOWNER. Will you please describe where the station is located so we can have it in the record?

Mr. MULLEN. The station is located on Washington Street at the foot of Exchange Street, at the junction of Exchange Street and Washington.

Mr. TOWNER. Also at the mouth of the Kenduskeag River, that empties into the Penobscot River?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes, sir. Now, in going from the station to the post office, in order to deliver the mails, you pass up Exchange Street as far as Central Street and come into the post office at the rear of the building from Central Street, or off of Central Street, instead of coming up Exchange Street and passing down State Street.

Mr. BURNETT. Why is that?

Mr. MULLEN. Because there is no way to pass into the building here [indicating on map] in order to get the mails or where the mails have to be delivered; the building occupies every inch of space.

Mr. TOWNER. Will you name the streets near the station, approximately the same distance from the station that the present site is, that are considered most desirable streets?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, Exchange Street and Harlow Street; those would be the only streets, I think, that come under your question.

Mr. ANDRUS. How about the value of property, say, from York Street down to Washington?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, there is a bank building right here [indicating on map].

Mr. TOWNER. On the corner of Exchange Street and Hancock?

Mr. MULLEN. No; at the corner of York Street and Exchange Street; that building was not burned, although it burned all around it, but did not burn the bank building.

Mr. TOWNER. Could a site be obtained on the corners of Exchange Street and State Streets, either of them?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes, any one of those four corners are available.

Mr. TOWNER. Are the corners of Exchange Street and York Street available, the three corners, and excepting the corner on which the bank building is located?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, they would be available all right, but I do not believe you want to build there because the territory back here [indicating] goes right up and it is pretty steep. You would not have so good an arrangement I should think.

Mr. ANDRUS. I notice on this map that the distance from the railroad station to the post office is 2,140 feet.

Mr. MULLEN. The way they have to go; yes, sir.

Mr. ANDRUS. There must be an added charge for the delivery of the mails?

Mr. MULLEN. I think there is.

Mr. ANDRUS. It has been the custom of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds to locate, if possible, buildings within the limit of 3,120 feet, in order to avoid that extra charge. In that way we save that much to the Government, and it amounts to a very large sum.

Mr. BURNETT. There might be this question in regard to that: That town is divided by this river—what is it?

Mr. MULLEN. Kenduskeag.

MR. BURNETT. How about the accessibility of these places and how about the crossing of the river? Are there any bridges there?

MR. MULLEN. No; only this bridge down here [indicating].

MR. BURNETT. So the bridges are further away?

MR. MULLEN. Yes, sir.

MR. BURNETT. Is there a bridge at the mouth of the Kenduskeag River?

MR. MULLEN. A railroad bridge.

MR. BURNETT. No city bridge?

MR. MULLEN. This district is all made up of wharves up here [indicating on map], away up to the bridge, where vessels lie at anchor.

MR. BURNETT. And you could not build a bridge there without making a draw along there?

MR. MULLEN. No, sir; this railroad bridge is a drawbridge.

MR. RODDENBERY. What do these dotted lines indicate from Exchange Street to the border of the stream?

MR. MULLEN. I do not know; I never saw the map, but that must have been a proposed street at the time that map was prepared.

MR. BURNETT. The town seems to be pretty well divided by the river, from the appearance here, and no doubt the Government would consider the accessibility of the post office and the customhouse to the different parts of the city, and that may have been the reason for locating it there?

MR. ANDRUS. I understand there was some strife about its location, and they located it in the middle of the stream?

MR. BURNETT. Was the lot bordering on Park Street and State Street and Central, near the old site, burned off?

MR. MULLEN. Yes, sir; that is all burned off clean.

MR. TOWNER. Is the property all around that little park burned?

MR. MULLEN. Yes, sir.

MR. TOWNER. Would a location facing on any of the corners there on the park be desirable?

MR. MULLEN. Yes, sir; a building could face there in any direction, either on State Street or on the part referred to as a park, but it is really Harlow Street; this is Harlow Street here [indicating] and that part is an open place.

MR. BURNETT. Would that bring it within the limit that Mr. Andrus suggested? As he says, wherever it has been possible we have tried to get within those limits in order to avoid that perpetual extra expense.

MR. MULLEN. No, sir; it would not. I will say that the city engineer, Mr. Coombs, has the actual measurements of these corners and he can give them to you at any time.

STATEMENT OF MR. P. H. COOMBS, CITY ENGINEER OF THE CITY OF BANGOR, ME.

MR. ANDRUS. How far would 1,320 feet from the station carry you in this direction?

MR. BURNETT. Along Exchange Street?

MR. COOMBS. It carries us from the station northerly up Exchange Street to and across State Street.

MR. TOWNER. Would any of the corners on State and Exchange Streets be within the limits?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir; all four of them; I am not testifying to 10 or 20 feet.

Mr. ANDRUS. Certainly the corner of York and Exchange Streets would be, because you said 1,320 feet would carry you to State Street?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes; it is within the limit.

Mr. ANDRUS. Have you any idea as to the value of property in that vicinity?

Mr. COOMBS. Why, yes; something; but before I say anything about the value of property I want to say that the situation of Kenduskeag stream and the property on either side of this stream, which is a small river, but it is called a stream with us, is wharf property and available for vessels and that sort of thing, and its value, relative to any property just north of State Street, is probably greater on that account; otherwise I think on a basis of area that the Exchange Street property, south of State Street, and within the 1,320-feet limit, is about equal to the value of any near-by property in this valley near the present post office and the customhouse.

Mr. ANDRUS. So it would be high-priced property, then?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir.

Mr. ANDRUS. How much higher would be the property up near Exchange Street and this Kenduskeag stream—that is, the property west of Exchange Street toward the stream—than the property east of Exchange Street toward State Street?

Mr. COOMBS. Well, I believe the value would be somewhere from 25 to 40 per cent more on the stream.

Mr. ANDRUS. But for post-office purposes we do not require the use of the stream?

Mr. COOMBS. No, sir. A little explanation that ought to be made at this time is that the grade from Exchange Street going east on State is very steep and the grade on York Street is very steep. For instance, below Harlow Street and French Street the grade is very steep.

Mr. ANDRUS. About what per cent?

Mr. COOMBS. Well, on State Street, about 10 per cent, and the land north of State Street, owing to the fact that the interior of the lot has never been graded, except for the immediate building sites, is very much more than 10 per cent; that is, I mean to say, in going from Harlow or Park Street, through the block situated between Park and French Streets, the grade is more than 10 per cent.

Mr. ANDRUS. What is the material?

Mr. COOMBS. It is clay.

Mr. ANDRUS. Not rock?

Mr. COOMBS. No, sir.

Mr. BURNETT. How is the grade between Exchange Street and French Street, south of State?

Mr. COOMBS. Why, at York Street it is fully 10 per cent, 10 feet in the hundred.

Mr. BURNETT. How is it on the other side of the river, on the west side?

Mr. COOMBS. Of course, Exchange Street on the west would be on the highest point.

Mr. BURNETT. How about Broad Street and that section of State Street?

Mr. COOMBS. Well, the land between Kenduskeag River and Broad Street is probably 4 or 5 per cent.

Mr. ANDRUS. How would you get from the depot to the west side of the stream?

Mr. COOMBS. Going north through Exchange Street, west through State Street, and south through Broad Street.

Mr. BURNETT. How are these lots south of Broad Street toward the depot, along Exchange Street and French Street?

Mr. COOMBS. As to topography?

Mr. BURNETT. Yes; and as to grade?

Mr. COOMBS. Why, the descent from Exchange Street toward the Kenduskeag stream probably averages about 5 per cent, 5 feet in the hundred; it is less going from Exchange Street eastward.

Mr. BURNETT. Does the country rise eastwardly or northerly?

Mr. COOMBS. Both east and north; down at Washington Street it is quite level.

Mr. BURNETT. But that is too far from accessibility to the west side of the stream?

Mr. COOMBS. That location, of course, would be very inconvenient.

Mr. ANDRUS. What about this location at the corner of York and Exchange Streets?

Mr. COOMBS. As far as convenience goes it would be only second to the vicinity of the present customhouse and post office.

Mr. BURNETT. Was the district south of York burned?

Mr. COOMBS. No; it is all brick.

Mr. BURNETT. Does this map show the burned part?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir.

Mr. BURNETT. Will this map be left with us?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir.

Mr. BURNETT. It will then be marked "Exhibit A."

Mr. ANDRUS. The value on the west side of Exchange Street, you say, is about 25 or 40 per cent higher?

Mr. COOMBS. I should say it would be affected by the location of the stream and navigation.

Mr. ANDRUS. How do you sell lots there, by the square foot or how?

Mr. COOMBS. There is no fixed size.

Mr. TOWNER. What would be a rough estimate as to the value of a lot, say, 125 feet square, at Exchange or York Streets, either one of those corners?

Mr. COOMBS. I want to first say that the assessed value for taxation, of one of these burned areas, say between State Street and Central Street and Harlow Street and Kenduskeag stream, is about \$200,000 for the block.

Mr. ANDRUS. What is the size of that block?

Mr. COOMBS. That block is about 190 feet by 400 feet.

Mr. BURNETT. That was before the burning?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes; that is about the assessed value.

Mr. ANDRUS. Then the land and buildings were assessed for \$200,000?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir; just about.

Mr. BURNETT. You do not assess your lands and buildings separately in Maine?

Mr. COOMBS. No, sir; not in Bangor.

Mr. ANDRUS. What was the value of the buildings, roughly speaking?

Mr. COOMBS. I am not able to state, but I am able to answer that a lot bounded by Exchange Street and the Kenduskeag stream, lying between York and State Streets, or on the eastern side of Exchange between York Street and State Street, would probably be in the vicinity of \$2 a square foot.

Mr. ANDRUS. For the land itself?

Mr. COOMBS. That is as it is now, burned over; it would probably sell for that.

Mr. ANDRUS. Your statement that a block 190 by 400 was assessed at \$200,000 would make it less than \$3, buildings and all?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir; the assessed value is probably very much lower than the actual selling price of any lot.

Mr. ANDRUS. What did you say the price would be?

Mr. COOMBS. I think it would be very near \$2 a square foot.

Mr. BURNETT. Those lots are not of uniform size?

Mr. COOMBS. No, sir.

Mr. TOWNER. Can you answer the question I asked you a moment ago?

Mr. COOMBS. I will ask you to repeat it.

Mr. TOWNER. What would a lot on either one of the corners cost, at the corner of York Street and Exchange Street, say a lot approximately 125 feet by 125 feet, under present conditions—just the land?

Mr. COOMBS. At either of the four corners?

Mr. TOWNER. Yes; the cheapest one.

Mr. COOMBS. I think either of the three corners could be had at about the rate of \$2 a square foot; I think the Kenduskeag stream and the wharves adjoining would increase that, but that is only my estimate.

Mr. ANDRUS. You could get a site up there for about \$30,000, according to those figures.

Mr. COOMBS. Well, of course that is a matter of computation.

Mr. ANDRUS. One hundred and twenty-five feet by 125 feet would be about 15,000 feet?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir.

Mr. ANDRUS. At \$2 a square foot?

Mr. COOMBS. Yes, sir. I think if a lot of that size would be adequate you could estimate it on that basis. I am not testifying as a real-estate expert, you understand.

Mr. ANDRUS. I know; but we want to confirm your estimates, because we have had some experience in this line. In cities of your population we have been able to buy, in other places, lands for post-office sites at about that figure.

Mr. RODDENBERRY. Yes; and that not in a time of disaster, when there would be general depression.

Mr. COOMBS. Now, I just want to remark in connection with that that if you cut out a piece of land 125 feet by 125 feet, leaving the balance of the block at great disadvantage, the value might be very seriously affected. The blocks south of York Street, on Exchange Street, are brick business blocks.

Mr. ANDRUS. Of course, you have not given it very careful consideration; but I want to say that your estimate agrees with the ideas and with the statements that we have from other gentlemen in other

parts of the country in regard to the value of land in cities of about the size of Bangor. Now, then, we want to do what we can; but we want to please the people, accommodate them, and get a good site, and for that purpose we are willing to pay a fair price.

Mr. MULLEN. You would not think, would you, Mr. Chairman, that it would be in the line of pleasing the people on this side if you would make them go across down there [indicating] to get their mail—that is, from the west side over to the east side down there to that corner to get their mail?

Mr. ANDRUS. But you have city delivery down there?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes.

Mr. ANDRUS. What percentage of your people go to the post office?

Mr. MULLEN. Practically all of the business portion goes to the post office.

Mr. ANDRUS. Do not they have their mail delivered?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes; they have their mail delivered in the town everywhere, but I am going to say that practically all—and I think Maj. Strickland and all of these gentlemen will bear me out in it—the business portion go to the post office and get their mail.

Mr. BURNETT. Is there much of the business portion on the west side, Mr. Mullen?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes, sir. Let me explain that. Main Street is the retail dry goods street of the town.

Mr. BURNETT. That is on the west side?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes. This is the street right here [indicating on map]. Now, in all of this country down in behind here, between that and Broad Street, including Broad Street itself, is found the wholesale business.

Mr. BURNETT. The railroad has no station on the west side?

Mr. MULLEN. It has a freight station on the west side, but no passenger station. Its passenger station is a new union station just completed.

Mr. TOWNER. Your idea would be that the most desirable location for the people of the town would be at the corner of State Street and Exchange Street. Is that it?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes, sir.

Mr. TOWNER. Tell us what one of those corners could be purchased for.

Mr. MULLEN. Well, I can not tell you definitely what one of those corners can be purchased for.

Mr. TOWNER. We understand that.

Mr. MULLEN. But you should be able to buy a lot 120 feet by 125 feet, if that will satisfy you in size, for something like \$100,000, and I am basing my calculations upon the price that the city was willing to pay on the west side four or five years ago for this lot that I have told you about which they undertook to condemn.

Mr. TOWNER. But you said it was a lot 130 feet by 300 feet?

Mr. MULLEN. Yes; but the back end of it ran down over the hill, and the value was on the street front.

Mr. BURNETT. The Treasury Department made a further report here that I did not read in regard to the question of cost. The report said:

A three-story and basement building having 12,000 square feet ground area will be sufficient.

That is their estimate of the size it ought to be. Also:

The usual 40 feet fire limit and sufficient ground to provide for a possible 30-foot extension of the building hereafter are included in the estimate for the site.

Mr. TOWNER. That would practically be 100 feet by 120 feet.

Mr. MULLEN. But that is for the absolute ground covered by the building.

Mr. RODDENBERY. It seems to me that 125 feet by 125 feet is entirely small enough.

Mr. BURNETT. They recommend 12,000 square feet.

Mr. TOWNER. One hundred feet by one hundred and twenty feet would be the building itself?

Mr. BURNETT. Yes; the report says:

The usual 40 feet fire limit and sufficient ground to provide for a possible 30-foot extension of the building hereafter are included in the estimate for the site.

They estimate it at \$125,000, and you can generally discount them by half.

Mr. MULLEN. That would extend the lot 80 feet in two years, 40 feet on the two sides.

Mr. COOMBS. I want to leave a plan of the city, on a small scale, which shows the entire burned district.

Mr. BURNETT. That plan will be marked "Exhibit B."

Mr. MULLEN. That plan should be filed with the other plan which is left here so you can see the station on the small plan and all of the city on the other. Now, just one more word. When we had our big blaze down there the other day we did not ask anybody to help us and we are not asking anybody to help us now, but we are asking the United States, and we are asking every business man and every business concern which had a block burned there to step up now and tell us whether or not they are going to help us build up Bangor, and give us a little chance to encourage the fellows who have not money enough to build. Now, I do not want you, and I do not want the chairman of the other committee, or anybody else, to ask me any question about way down on Exchange Street; you would not get any professional man to go down there, because the country is too rough for your building; but there are any number of lots that are available there to-day, burned off clean and ready for you to go to work on, and what we want you to do down there is to take hold and help us, give us some idea as to what you will do in relation to giving a building down there that will help Bangor.

That is what we want, and that is what I am sent here for, to represent them as the chief magistrate of that city, and that is what we ask and all we ask; and we hope you will say something in relation to giving us a building there as some of the business men have already said they are going to rebuild, and that they are going to build better buildings than they had before; and we hope that you will say you are going to build in a better place.

I want to say further that all we are asking you to give back to us down there is what is practically collected in customs in one year. I thank you.

Mr. BURNETT. If the Government should desire to sell the present site, what could they probably realize on it?

Mr. MULLEN. Well, if it is necessary, as I understand it is, from the report of the Government engineers and inspectors who have

inspected it, to lay out \$66,000 on maintaining the foundations, then it would not have very much value as a business proposition, because that price would be too great and the site of the building is so narrow. Of course, it is worth something.

Mr. BURNETT. The Government would not spend this appropriation which has been made if they changed the site.

Mr. MULLEN. I understand, but the fellow that bought it would have to do that. The Government might spend a good deal of money on a Government building that a man building a business house would not want to spend. If the foundations are unsafe for the Government they are unsafe for anybody else to build upon.

Mr. BURNETT. That would be according to the use to which the building was to be put. About what would be your estimate as to its value and the amount for which it could be sold, taking all those adverse conditions into consideration?

Mr. MULLEN. I do not know. I do not know that I would want to make an estimate on that. Here are other men who are better qualified to tell you that.

Mr. BURNETT. I will ask that of the city engineer.

Mr. MULLEN. I think Maj. Strickland, perhaps, can tell you better than either the city engineer or myself.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I should say that it was of very little value for any practical purpose.

Mr. BURNETT. Do the boats run up there?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No, sir; there is a bridge south of it, and this is a narrow way between the two bridges.

Mr. BURNETT. Is it entirely surrounded by water? Is it an island?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No; it was built purposely for the post office.

Mr. ANDRUS. But there was some land there before the post office was built?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No, sir; it was built right in the middle of the stream.

Mr. ANDRUS. Was there no rock visible at low tide?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No, sir. However, I was not living when that was built, but that is the way I understand it.

Mr. ANDRUS. Fifty-four years ago it was valued at \$15,000.

Mr. DAY. There were old buildings on it. It was an old marketplace property.

Mr. BURNETT. Would it not be a good place for a market at this time?

Mr. DAY. Perhaps it would.

STATEMENT OF MR. A. R. DAY, COLLECTOR OF CUSTOMS, BANGOR, ME.

Mr. DAY. I have nothing more to add except as to the emergency proposition. Our post office is in very bad condition and entirely unsatisfactory to the people; they have done the best they could and the best they will be able to do for room until we get a new building. As to my own department I have gone on the third floor over a clothing store, which is all I can get, and the best I can get, without vaults, without safes, and without anything; my records must be kept on shelves. We handle down there a good deal of money and we

do want relief as soon as the Government can possibly give it to us in the way of an adequate building.

Mr. BURNETT. How are the post-office facilities now?

Mr. DAY. They are extremely bad, sir, although they are the very best, as I said to you, that can be gotten now or can be gotten until a new building is built. The post office is in the Young Men's Christian Association Building, in the rear of it, in what the boys use for their playrooms, gymnasium, and swimming tanks, and so on.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES F. JOHNSON, A SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MAINE.

Senator JOHNSON. I have just a word to say, because I think the Senate committee wants to meet some of these gentlemen. I want to say a word, if you will permit me, in regard to the situation there.

Of course, it is very evident what the situation is. Bangor was one of our busy, hustling cities in Maine—I think second in the lumber interests in the United States—and this loss, of course, has come upon them suddenly, wiping out a large portion of the business section. The people are full of courage and hope, and certainly think the Government should take hold of the matter at the present time and provide adequate buildings which are needed there for the Government service. It would encourage them and add to the hope and courage which they now have. I know your committee will do what it can to assist them at this time, when they have had this great disaster.

Mr. BURNETT. Is it not probably true that the Government could get property now much cheaper than it could after it was rebuilt by the business interests?

Senator JOHNSON. Undoubtedly, under the present conditions.

Mr. GUERNSEY. There are one or two questions I would like to ask Mr. Day, who has just testified. Mr. Day, what were the receipts of your custom house last year?

Mr. DAY. \$325,000.

Mr. GUERNSEY. What was the cost of collection to the Government at that point?

Mr. DAY. Seven and one-half per cent last year.

Mr. GUERNSEY. What were your entries?

Mr. DAY. They are running from 20,000 to 25,000.

Mr. GUERNSEY. Why are your entries so large?

Mr. DAY. Why, we have and control the entire Canadian Pacific business as it comes into the State on the one side and goes out on the other.

Mr. GUERNSEY. How does the cost of the collection of customs there compare with offices of like receipts throughout the country?

Mr. DAY. Well, very much less, as the gentlemen can learn from the Treasury reports. We have not exceeded a cost of 8 per cent in collection and we have run down as low as 6 per cent. We have turned into the United States Government within the last five years about \$2,000,000.

Mr. BURNETT. Is your postmaster here?

Mr. DAY. No, sir.

Mr. BURNETT. The reason I ask is that I notice in the Government report they state the postal receipts of 1901 as \$67,735.16 and in 1910 \$123,665.93, almost 100 per cent.

Mr. DAY. Yes, sir; those are official figures; they are correct, sir.

Mr. SHEPPARD. Is there a customhouse at the point where the Canadian Pacific crosses the St. Lawrence?

Mr. DAY. We have subports; one at Vanceboro, one at Lowelltown, one at Moose River, and one at Danforth.

Mr. SHEPPARD. Why was it they came so far inland?

Mr. DAY. Because everything centers toward Bangor, and the Government owns no property in either of those places, except that they have one customhouse on leased land at Vanceboro, a wooden building.

Mr. SHEPPARD. What is done to the goods at those subports before they get to Bangor?

Mr. DAY. They are appraised, duties collected, and the money forwarded to the general office at Bangor, where the work is done.

Mr. GUERNSEY. In your present quarters have you opportunity to take care of the Government's money while the banks are closed?

Mr. DAY. I have explained to the committee that our quarters are entirely inadequate; we have no safeguards for public moneys or records.

Mr. GUERNSEY. Can you make some statement in regard to the situation of the postmaster in regard to the conduct of the post office so far as money goes?

Mr. DAY. His situation is worse than mine. That is the center, the clearing house as it were, for all post offices all over the adjacent country, and money orders come in to him in large numbers. It is not unusual for him to have in one day \$10,000 of Government money.

Mr. BURNETT. If the Government starts the building at once it would take a year or more to complete it, and in the meantime do you contemplate having this temporary arrangement?

Mr. DAY. Yes, sir; because it is all we can get. The town is half burned up, the buildings we could have gotten into are gone, everybody is crowded, and everybody has divided space.

Mr. BURNETT. Is the west side burned?

Mr. DAY. No, sir.

Mr. BURNETT. Are there any better quarters over on the west side?

Mr. DAY. We are on the west side, sir, and got the best we could.

Mr. ANDRUS. Have you a safe?

Mr. DAY. We have none, but I imagine the department will provide me with a small safe that we can get into the attic that we are obliged to use.

Mr. GUERNSEY. What about your records?

Mr. DAY. We have no vaults or cases in which to place them.

Mr. GUERNSEY. The old records were destroyed?

Mr. DAY. They were a total loss, sir.

Mr. TOWNER. Is the building in which you now are fireproof?

Mr. DAY. No, sir; it is not, sir; but it is one of the best buildings left standing that would be convenient for the Government's business.

Mr. GUERNSEY. Do you think immediate action would advance building there a year?

Mr. DAY. Immediate action, in my judgment, would do that. As the mayor has already said, if we could get immediate action from Congress, which I hope we may at this special session, it would advance the building of our Government building at least a year on account of our short season.

Mr. SHEPPARD. Does that work have to stop during December?

Mr. DAY. Yes, sir; practically; that is, it would have to stop unless we were above the foundations and closed in. I think I am right about that.

Mr. COOMBS. Our building season closes about the 1st of December, owing to the frost and cold weather.

Mr. SHEPPARD. How long does it remain closed until you can begin open work again?

Mr. COOMBS. About March; along in March some time.

Mr. GUERNSEY. Col. Strickland and Mr. Towle, of Bangor, are here, and I am not sure but what they have some statements they would like to make to the committee.

STATEMENT OF MR. TERRENCE B. TOWLE, OF BANGOR, ME.

Mr. TOWLE. I will simply say, as one of the young men of Bangor, that the situation as it stands in Bangor to-day is simply this, that the major portion of the easterly side of our city has gone to ashes. My office is right next to the post office, and on that line I may say, in the matter of the people going to the post office, that I do not believe there would be 5 per cent of the business interests of Bangor—professional men, commercial business men, and others—but what go to that post office. It always was, you might say, right in the center of the pivot of the town, and in talking with the property owners and in talking with the men whose property has been destroyed, everybody seems to be at a sort of standstill; they do not know what the Government is going to do and there seems to be an idea that if some favorable report will come from the Government in the way of their making an improvement, it would have the effect of causing enthusiasm there, and that men would take hold and rebuild their properties which have been destroyed and rebuild in a much better manner, as we believe. The condition to-day, on the question of whether the business houses, the large commercial blocks, are rebuilt in the city of Bangor depends almost entirely on the action of your Government.

Mr. BURNETT. You do not understand, perhaps, the situation. Our Democratic caucus decided not to go into any matters of this kind. They laid out a certain line of action unless some urgent need arose, and we must convince that caucus before it will vary from that resolution; we must convince that caucus that there is an urgent necessity for this action, and it is going to be mighty hard for us to do it, because I have talked with the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations and know his feeling. Suppose the committee were to recommend an appropriation for a site and that site should be purchased and that much should be fixed; would not that to a great extent obviate the trouble you speak of, the uncertainty existing in the minds of the people about rebuilding?

Mr. SHEPPARD. With the assurance that it was our intention at the next regular session, in the omnibus bill, to complete the appropriation?

Mr. TOWLE. Of course, that would leave us at the mercy of Congress and would still leave an uncertainty as to the nature of the building, and the amount of money that might be appropriated for that building.

Mr. TOWNER. We might be ever so glad to help you and not be able to do so.

Mr. TOWLE. As I say, there is a desire for immediate action. Bangor has never suffered anything of this kind, and there seemed, for a day or two after the fire, to be a sort of depression, everybody was downcast, no one knew where to go; offices were destroyed and commercial business houses were destroyed; men who had been in business for 25 or 30 years had their places of business wiped out and did not know where they were going to turn, there being no available place. But now the spirit is coming back, and if they can only feel the Government is going to take a step forward, the moneyed interests there, the men who own the land and owned the buildings that were destroyed, will feel that same civic pride, I think, in taking hold and bettering the conditions of Bangor.

STATEMENT OF MR. T. H. STRICKLAND, OF BANGOR, ME.

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think the points have been well covered, and I do not know that I want to say anything further than that I was born in Bangor and was brought up there and my father before me, and that my grandfather went there in 1830. We have a civic pride there in seeing the city rebuilt, and as to the four lots on these corners, some of the owners have intimated that they will go ahead and build, and if we can have the Government select a lot and start and give us the impetus which will be given by having the Government employees there at work and making business of that sort, which all helps to make business, we will be greatly pleased. That is what we want and that is what we hope this Congress will do and that is what we are here for, to explain our necessity. I think the ground has otherwise been well covered.

Mr. BURNETT. Let me ask you whether you think the estimate of \$100,000 is excessive for those lots in there?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No, sir; I do not, and it is a question whether you can buy a lot for \$100,000. Of course, you have the right, as I understand, to go ahead and do certain things, but the values that the people put upon these properties, which are in the very best business section of the city, are quite high, and in a great many cases the land value to-day, for a new building is almost as much as the total assessed value. Of course, some of these buildings were not a credit to any live city, but they were giving good returns to the owners, and you understand that when a man is getting good interest on his money, as much as 8 per cent, he is not going to build a building that will only give him 4 per cent.

Mr. ANDRUS. What is your present population?

Mr. STRICKLAND. About 25,000.

Mr. ANDRUS. Sites for post office buildings in cities of 25,000, 30,000, or 40,000 people have been offered, and the prices did not reach \$100,000 in any case. Is this an exceptional case?

Mr. STRICKLAND. Yes, I think so; because this is right in the heart of the business section.

Mr. ANDRUS. The old site must be sold for something; we had to pay \$15,000 for it over 50 years ago. Could you not find somebody to make the Government an offer for the old site?

Mr. STRICKLAND. I think our people have all they can do to rebuild the burned district. A good many of the buildings have diversified owners, some of them running into sixteenths, and it is quite difficult to get those people together and agree to build. The owners of property on one of the corners are taking up the question of rebuilding and it is expected they will rebuild, although it has not been absolutely decided upon; the other corners are owned by several different parties, and some of them have various ideas as to the value of the property. I was standing with four other business gentlemen day before yesterday, near the site of the post-office, and the question came up, "How near buying this strip of land in here will \$100,000 come?" And there was not a man of the four that said it would buy that strip.

Mr. BURNETT. That was the entire block, was it not?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No; that is a burned block, and that was on the corner of State Street and Harlow, on the north side of State.

Mr. BURNETT. Harlow Street commences at State Street and runs north and Exchange Street commences at State Street and runs south, and one is the continuation of the other?

Mr. STRICKLAND. Yes, sir.

Mr. TOWNER. The price of property farther east on State Street would probably be less?

Mr. STRICKLAND. Then you are getting right into the residential section, and it is up hill, a 10 per cent grade.

Mr. ANDRUS. The Kenduskeag stream has no commercial value above State Street, has it?

Mr. STRICKLAND. No, sir; there is that old riprap granite structure on which the old post office stood, and it is only a few years ago since the Government spent several thousand dollars fixing it up, and I now understand it was intended to put some \$60,000 into it this year, or right away, in order to keep that building up.

Mr. BURNETT. Is the extension of the island, north of Central Street, built up to some extent?

Mr. STRICKLAND. That is what we call Norombega Hall, built on piles. Behind that was the old building running between Central Street and Franklin Street and set up on piles. Now, speaking about civic pride, I want to say that our citizens raised locally about \$50,000 for our relief. We took hold ourselves and raised \$50,000, although we got a few thousand dollars from men who were raised in Bangor and who sent their checks. I have been quite intimately connected with some of the relief work and saw some of the people who came for relief, and among those people were some of our best families.

(The subcommittee thereupon adjourned.)