

1911

Public Building at Bangor, Maine: August 7, 1911

United States House of Representatives

Follow this and additional works at: https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs

Recommended Citation

United States House of Representatives, "Public Building at Bangor, Maine: August 7, 1911" (1911). *Books and Publications*. 218.
https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs/218

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. It has been accepted for inclusion in Books and Publications by an authorized administrator of Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. For more information, please contact ccoombs@bpl.lib.me.us.

PUBLIC BUILDING AT BANGOR, ME.

AUGUST 7, 1911.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

MR. SHEPPARD, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 2055.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to which was referred the bill of the Senate (S. 2055) to provide for the erection of a public building at Bangor, Me., respectfully reports the same with the recommendation that the bill do pass. In the disastrous fire of April 30 of this year the Federal building at Bangor was destroyed with many other buildings of a large section of the city. So widespread was the disaster that adequate quarters can not be found even for the temporary accommodation of the Federal offices located in that city, which include the post office, the United States courts, the customs and internal-revenue service, the steamboat-inspection service, pension examiner, marine surgeon, and recruiting office. The post office is housed at present in the Y. M. C. A. building and the customs offices are located on the third floor of a dry goods store with no vault protection. The population of Bangor, according to the last census, is 24,803, and of the adjoining city of Brewer, a station of the Bangor post office, 5,667. The postal receipts of Bangor for 1901 were \$67,735.16; for 1910, \$123,665.93. The customs receipts for 1900 were \$207,751.21; for 1910, \$328,591.76. The rapid growth of both post office and customs receipts indicates the importance of the city from commercial and Federal revenue standpoints.

The committee agrees with the Senate and the Treasury Department that the old site is no longer practicable. It is located on an island in the Kenduskeag River, and is constantly menaced by spring floods and heavy ice floes. The sundry civil bill of June 25, 1910, carried an appropriation of \$60,000 for the strengthening of the retaining walls maintained by the Government for the protection of its Bangor property, and we are advised by the Treasury Department that the expenditure will prove useless unless adjoining property owners make similar improvements. These walls were originally built by the Government

in cooperation with the city of Bangor at a cost of \$23,000, and the expense of maintaining them has already amounted to \$18,000. We are further advised that the present site is not only of insufficient size, but that the expense involved by reason of locating the new building on the island would almost equal the cost of a suitable site on the mainland in the business section.

...The bill under consideration provides for the purchase of a new site and the erection of a new building, the total cost not to exceed \$400,000. Of this amount \$150,000 is made immediately available, and the sum of \$60,000, heretofore appropriated for the retaining walls, is reappropriated for the purposes of this act. The old site and remains of the former building are to be sold under the direction of the Government and the proceeds deposited in the Treasury as a miscellaneous receipt. Letters are appended from the Secretary of the Treasury showing that the amount provided in the bill follows the estimate submitted by the department, and showing the conditions at Bangor as before described. The business district of the city, being confined to a narrow valley, is unusually small, and any appropriate site would bring a price unusually high when compared with cities of similar size elsewhere. But for the destruction occasioned by the fire and the willingness of the citizens to aid the Government in securing a suitable site, it would be practically impossible to secure a site in or reasonably near the business section. The Senators and Representatives from Maine, the mayor, and other prominent officials and citizens of Bangor have appeared before the committee, and a careful investigation of the case has been made. On account of an early and rigorous winter the building season at Bangor will close in a short while, and unless action is immediately taken nothing can be done toward relieving the present situation for almost a year.

In view of these facts, the committee is unanimously of the opinion that an urgent public emergency exists at Bangor and that the bill should pass.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, May 13, 1911.

CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS,
United States Senate.

SIR: Referring to your request for a report in connection with S. 2055, providing for a site and building at Bangor, Me., at a cost not to exceed \$400,000, I have the honor to submit the following:

The branches of the Federal service requiring accommodations at Bangor, Me., are the post office, United States courts, Customs and Internal-Revenue Services, Steamboat-Inspection Service, pension examiner, marine surgeon, and recruiting office.

The Census Office reports the population of Bangor to be 24,803 as taken by the last census, and the records of the Auditor for the Post Office Department show that the postal receipts in 1901 were \$67,735.16 and in 1910, \$123,665.93.

It is estimated from information furnished by the superintendent of construction at Bangor, Me., under date of the 9th instant, that a three-story and basement building having 12,000 square feet ground area will be sufficient, and that such a building of fireproof construction will cost \$300,000, exclusive of site. It is estimated that a suitable site can be procured for \$125,000.

The usual 40-foot 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.

In response to your further inquiry you are advised that there was complete destruction of the former building, so that restoration thereof is impracticable, and to rebuild on the old insufficient site it would be necessary to clear away the ruins of the old structure, including foundations. The present site being in the center

of the river, foundations for a new building thereon would be more expensive than if a new building is erected on a suitable site on the mainland.

In this connection attention is invited to the appropriation in the sundry civil act of June 25, 1910 (vol. 36, p. 704), for Bangor, Me., for retaining wall and approaches, \$60,000. Of this \$29.54 has been expended for the services of the surveyor, leaving a balance of \$59,970.46.

Respectfully,

FRANKLIN MACVEAGH, *Secretary.*

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, May 17, 1911.

CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS,
United States Senate.

SIR: The customhouse and post-office building at Bangor, Me., which was completely destroyed by fire, covered all the available space on the lot, which was 50 by 300 feet (the space at the ends of the site being so far removed from the center of the building as to be unavailable for building purposes), and was insufficient for the transaction of public business.

It is necessary to protect the island on which this site is situated by very strong sea walls, as the flow of ice at the time of spring floods is a menace. It is estimated that to put the present wall in suitable condition will require the entire appropriation which has been made therefor of \$60,000, and when done will be useless unless adjoining property owners protect their river front in as substantial a manner. In addition to this \$60,000 there will be an expense of \$30,000 to carry the foundations of the building down so that in case of disastrous floods weakening the sea wall there would be no danger of undermining the building footings.

It therefore appears impracticable to construct a building on the island site of suitable size for the transaction of public business, and also that the contingent expenses which would be necessary on account of locating the building on the island would be nearly equal to the cost of a site on the mainland of suitable size and shape.

There are no remains of any value of the old building which would be of use in constructing the new.

Respectfully,

FRANKLIN MACVEAGH, *Secretary.*

O