

1911

# Public Building at Bangor, Maine: May 23, 1911

United State Senate

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PUBLIC BUILDING AT BANGOR, ME.

APR 1 1915

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MAY 23, 1911.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WETMORE, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,  
submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany S. 2055.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2055) to provide for the erection of a public building at Bangor, Me., has had the same under consideration with the accompanying papers, and reports it back with the following substitute:

A BILL To provide for the purchase of a site and erection of a new public building at Bangor, Maine, also for the sale of the site and ruins of the former post-office building.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Secretary of the Treasury be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to acquire by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise, a suitable site and to contract, within the limit of cost hereinafter fixed, for the erection and completion thereon of a suitable and commodious building, including fireproof vaults, heating, hoisting, and ventilating apparatus, and approaches, complete, for the use and accommodation of the post office and other Government offices at Bangor, Maine, at a cost for said site and building of not exceeding four hundred thousand dollars.

An open space of such width, including streets and alleys, as the Secretary of the Treasury may determine shall be maintained about said building for the protection thereof from fire in adjacent buildings.

For the purposes aforesaid the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars is hereby appropriated out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated: *Provided,* That the balance of the appropriation heretofore made by the sundry civil act of June twenty-fifth, nineteen hundred and ten, for the retaining wall and approaches at the former post-office building in said city is hereby reappropriated and made immediately available, in addition to the appropriation hereinbefore made, toward the purposes of this act.

And the Secretary of the Treasury is further authorized and directed to sell, in such manner and upon such terms as he may deem for the best interests of the United States, the site and remains of the former post-office building in said city recently destroyed by fire; to convey the last-mentioned land to such purchaser or purchasers by the usual quitclaim deed, and to deposit the proceeds derived from such sale in the Treasury of the United States as a miscellaneous receipt.

On April 30 a conflagration destroyed a large portion of the business section of Bangor, including the Federal building. It appears from the letter of the Secretary of the Treasury, dated May 13,



attached to this report (marked "A"), that "there was a complete destruction of the former building, so that the restoration thereof is impracticable." The different branches of the Government service formerly occupying the building are now in rented quarters—the post office in the Y. M. C. A. Building and the customhouse in the top floor of a dry-goods store—with insufficient space and no protection for the valuable official records that were saved from the fire.

The substitute bill provides for the purchase of a new site and the erection of a new building; also directs the Secretary of the Treasury to dispose of the old site and remains of the former post-office building and upon such terms as he may deem for the best interests of the United States, and reappropriates to the purposes of this act, within the limit of cost, the appropriation of \$60,000 not yet expended, made in the sundry civil act of June 25, 1910 (marked "B"), for a retaining wall and approaches on the old site.

In a letter dated May 17, attached to this report (marked "C"), the Secretary of the Treasury states: "It appears to be impracticable to construct a new building on the present site."

The present site is on an island in the middle of the Kenduskeag River, running through the city of Bangor, and the Secretary also states in substance, in the same letter, it was 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; that to put the present wall in suitable condition will require the entire appropriation of \$60,000 made by Congress last year for that purpose, and when done will be useless unless adjoining property owners protect their river front in as substantial a manner. In addition to this amount 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, and also that the contingent expense necessary on account of erecting the building on the island will be nearly equal to the cost of a site on the mainland of suitable size and shape. The sea walls referred to were constructed in 1889 jointly by the United States and the city of Bangor at a cost of \$23,000. In addition the Government expended \$18,000 in repairing the sea walls prior to the appropriation of \$60,000 above referred to.

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

The population of Bangor at the census of 1910 was 24,803, but attached to the Bangor postal delivery is the adjoining city of Brewer, with a population at the same period of 5,667, which is a station of the Bangor post office. The postal receipts in 1901 were \$67,735.16 and in 1910, \$123,665.93. The customs receipts in 1900 were \$207,751.21 and in 1910, \$328,591.76.

Owing to the total loss of the old building and the impossibility of securing suitable temporary quarters for the Government offices, on account of the destruction of most of the business portion of the city, your committee deems this to be a case of unusual emergency and recommends the immediate passage of the bill as amended.

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 secured 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.*

AN ACT Making appropriations for sundry civil expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1911, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the following sums be, and the same are hereby, appropriated, for the objects hereinafter expressed, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eleven, namely:

UNDER THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Bangor, Maine, customhouse and post office: For retaining wall and approaches, sixty thousand dollars.

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

CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE 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.*



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