

## HOUSE...No. 182.

---

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, March 18, 1861.

The Committee on Education, to whom was referred the Report of the Trustees of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, submit the following

#### R E P O R T :

A great number of the members of the legislature having recently visited the museum, the Committee deem it unnecessary to do more than allude to its admirable condition, and to the evidence it affords of the great knowledge, the sound judgment, and the vast labor bestowed upon the arrangement and care of the invaluable collections contained in the building.

The Committee beg leave to present a brief statement of the means and wants of the institution.

The property and resources of the museum are as follows:—

1. The land upon which the building stands, presented to the museum by Harvard College, and the building itself, erected and furnished by private subscription.

2. The collections, consisting of those made by Mr. Agassiz, previously to 1852, at a cost of twelve thousand dollars, purchased of him by Harvard College at that price, and presented

by the college to the museum,—of those made by Mr. Agassiz, since 1852, at a cost exceeding ten thousand dollars, and presented by him to the museum,—of those purchased by Mr. Agassiz in Europe, by direction of the trustees, at a cost of five thousand dollars,—and of donations of great value made by many persons interested in natural science.

3. The income of the Gray Fund of \$50,000, which income is applicable only to the enlargement and preservation of the collection, and not to buildings or salaries.

Of the private subscription of 1859, amounting to \$71,125, about \$52,000 were expended in the construction, finishing and furnishing of the building; \$5,000 for the purchase of specimens in Europe, and the balance for the preservation and arrangement of the collections now on the shelves and for current expenses. The sum of \$1,415 remains in the hands of the treasurer, but is appropriated to meet charges already incurred.

The museum has the services of the curator without expense, the only salary received by that gentleman being in his capacity of Professor in the Lawrence Scientific School.

A grant of one hundred thousand dollars was made to the museum by the State, in 1859, to be paid from the proceeds of sales of the Back Bay lands. From this grant nothing has yet been received. It is expected, however, that one-fifth of it will be obtained in the course of the summer. The trustees have determined that this sum shall not be expended as it is received, but shall be invested, and the income alone applied to the maintenance of the institution. The Committee fully concur in the wisdom of this decision, because it will secure to the museum a permanent and sufficient income, and will prevent the necessity of any future appeal to the State for its support and progress.

The present wants of the museum spring from the great extent and value of the collections now made, and which there are no means of arranging and exhibiting. These specimens are mostly stored in the cellar, in boxes and barrels, and are useless for purposes of scientific investigation, and liable to injury and loss.

It appears from a careful estimate, that to preserve and arrange them so that they shall be available for inspection,

will require an expenditure of \$12,000 for glass jars and alcohol, of \$3,000 for work, in addition to a great amount of work which will be gratuitously performed, and of \$5,000 for cases to exhibit them in, making in all \$20,000. This expenditure will also considerably increase the collections, by furnishing the means of classifying the duplicate specimens, which can then be given to other museums in exchange for new specimens.

It is the unanimous opinion of the Committee that this sum should be granted by the Commonwealth for the above mentioned purposes.

The museum is a State institution. It is governed by fifteen trustees, eight of whom are appointed directly by the State, the seven other places being filled as they become vacant, by the board itself. The entire property of the institution is held by this board in trust, for the people of the Commonwealth, and managed for their use and instruction. And yet the State has not contributed one dollar to the museum as it stands to-day with its building, its collections, and all the results of the labors of Mr. Agassiz, and his able and zealous assistants. It is true that the munificent grant from the sales of the Back Bay lands had a most important effect upon the success of the museum: but that effect has so far been limited to the influence of the grant as an act of the Commonwealth, and to the prospect of a permanent income from it in the future. It is to be remembered in this connection that the State grant originally proposed by the committee having the subject in charge in 1859, was to be in the form of scrip, redeemable from the proceeds of sales. If this plan had been adopted, the museum would now be in receipt of the interest of the grant, and would have no occasion to appeal again to the legislature.

In consequence, not of any legal requirement, but of the voluntary engagement of Mr. Agassiz, the two courses of instruction annually given in the museum are open without charge to all teachers in the public schools. At the last course one hundred and thirty teachers attended, and were instructed in the branches of science taught at the museum, and, also, specially in the art of teaching those branches to others. This feature of the museum makes it in fact a normal school for physical geography and the kindred sciences. This instruction,

while it has greatly increased the value of the museum to public education, has also considerably diminished its income from fees for instruction.

It is necessary that the expenditure proposed should be made now that all the specimens may be preserved, and that the arrangement and exhibition of them may give the museum the value and the rank to which the importance of its collections entitle it. It would also be very desirable for the usefulness of the collections that a complete catalogue of them should be made which would cost about five thousand dollars; but the Committee have not reported any appropriation for this purpose, because they are not prepared to recommend any expenditure not called for by the absolute necessities of the museum.

The trustees have expended from the funds intrusted to them only two hundred and fifty dollars for salaries; they have expended nothing for ornament or show, nothing for any purpose but the erection of a plain and substantial building, and the arrangement of the collections in it, excepting the sum already mentioned for buying in Europe standard specimens positively needed to compare other specimens with. Notwithstanding their care and economy in the use of their funds, they now find themselves without money to meet the current expenses, and the museum has no present means of support except from the private resources of Professor Agassiz.

The people of the Commonwealth look with pride and hope upon an institution so wisely planned and so nobly founded. In the belief that it is not their wish that this great museum established for the benefit of all should depend upon the hard earnings and the disinterested exertions of one man for its maintenance, or that it should fail of completion for lack of present means, the Committee respectfully submit the accompanying Resolve.

For the Committee,

MARTIN BRIMMER.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

---

In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-One.

---

### R E S O L V E

In aid of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy.

*Resolved*, That there be allowed and paid out of the treasury of the Commonwealth to the trustees of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy the sum of twenty thousand dollars, to be applied to the support of the museum and to the care and preservation of the collections belonging thereto, and the said sum is hereby appropriated for that purpose.

