

## HOUSE....No. 92.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February 21, 1863.

The Committee on Finance, having been ordered to "consider the expediency of reducing the number of copies of the pamphlet edition of the General Laws and Resolves required to be published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth after each session of the legislature, for general distribution," have attended to that duty, and make the following

#### REPORT:

By chapter three, section three, of the General Statutes, the Secretary was required, immediately after the close of each session to cause to be published in a pamphlet form such number of copies of the general laws as would supply each family in the Commonwealth with one copy, or one copy to each eight inhabitants, and cause the same to be apportioned according to the census, and sent to the clerks of the several cities and towns for distribution. The number of copies printed and distributed under this rule was about one hundred and fifty thousand. Only a small portion of this vast number ever reached the hands of the people in a way to serve the purpose of the legislature in disseminating a "knowledge of the law." It was customary in some places to take these pamphlets to town meeting and there offer a copy to every person without distinc-

tion who would receive it. In other localities they were left exposed in public rooms, in such a way that all who chanced to come in might consider themselves invited to take a copy. But it does not appear that any considerable number were distributed; the great bulk of them remained on hand until the room they occupied was coveted for other purposes, when it was the custom, in some cases, to send them to the nearest paper mill or use them at the neighboring grocery for wrapping paper.

The legislature of last year had its attention directed to this apparent extravagance and waste, and the law was changed so as to authorize the publication of only seventy-five thousand copies.

According to the best information your Committee have been able to obtain, the number of copies should be still further reduced, and they are unanimous in the opinion that it should not exceed forty thousand. There is a possibility that even this number will be open to the charge of extravagance, but your Committee deem it wise to proceed cautiously in the reduction of the number until the proper standard is reached, to the end that there be at no time any valid reason for a complaint that the laws are not within the reach of all the people. The cost of publishing seventy-five thousand copies of the Laws and Resolves of 1862 was six thousand five hundred and seventeen dollars. Owing to the increased cost of paper at this time it is estimated that forty thousand copies of the Laws and Resolves of the present session will amount to four thousand two hundred and fifty dollars.

The Committee recommend the accompanying Bill.

Per order,

D. L. HARRIS.

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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

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### AN ACT

To provide for the Publication and Distribution of the  
General Laws and Resolves.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—*

1    SECT. 1. The secretary of the Commonwealth shall  
2 immediately after the close of each session of the  
3 general court, cause to be published in a pamphlet  
4 form, forty thousand copies of the general laws and  
5 resolves; and the secretary shall cause the same to be  
6 apportioned according to the census, and sent to the  
7 clerks of the several cities and towns, to be delivered  
8 by them to such inhabitants of said cities and towns  
9 as shall make application therefor.

1    SECT. 2. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent  
2 with this act, are hereby repealed.

1    SECT. 3. This act shall take effect upon its  
2 passage.

