To His Excellency, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY.

I have received, by the hands of Mr. Bangs, your much esteemed favor of the 23d ult., containing your remarks in relation to the territory in Maine, to which our right is disputed by the government of Great Britain, and also your instructions relative to an arrangement contemplated to be made with the State of Maine, for the sale, disposition, and management of the public lands. It gives me great satisfaction to find your views on both subjects correspond with those I entertain. I shall be particularly careful, in every measure of mine, not to do any act that may have a tendency to commit the Commonwealth in the controversy between the United States and Great Britain, unless specially directed by the Legislature.
As the proposed arrangement respecting the public lands emanated from the State of Maine, I shall await the opening of their project before I form any definite views; and if any doubt arises in my mind, as to the policy of any measure that may be proposed and urged by their Commissioner, I shall avail myself of your Excellency's counsel and advice, which you have so kindly offered.

In compliance with your request to be informed as to the state of the lands, &c. under my agency, I have the honor to report, in general terms, all my proceedings for the past year, as follows:—Some time about the middle of March last, a newspaper was forwarded to me from Bangor, in which was an order of notice upon the petition to the Legislature of Maine, of sundry persons, to be incorporated with power to erect booms, dams, and sluices, on the upper waters of the East and West branches of Penobscot river, and to take toll, of from 30 to 50 cents per M. for all the logs that should come down said branches. The operation of this tax would have been severely felt by Maine and Massachusetts, as it would have fallen principally upon the timber, which may hereafter be brought from the undivided lands. As the Legislature of this Commonwealth was then in session, it was inconvenient for me to leave home. I forwarded a remonstrance, and, as soon as our Legislature rose, I went to Portland to ascertain what was doing; a bill had passed the House, and to the last stage in the Senate, incorporating a Mr. Bradbury and his associates, with exclusive power to occupy the West branch of the Sacois River, and to take a toll of 50 cents per M. on all the logs or timber passing through the same. With the aid of some of my
friends, the bill was committed to the Land Committee, to whom it was made evident, that the only timber affected by the proposed toll, stands on the undivided lands; that there is one tract of three miles by nine miles (say 17,000 acres) of the best timber land to be found in Maine, averaging at least 4 M. to the acre, which must come down the sluice, on which 1½ cents per M. would pay the expense of making sufficient booms and dams for all the objects contemplated. The Committee reported leave to withdraw, which was accepted by the Legislature. Another bill, incorporating a Mr. Smith and his associates, for the same purposes, on the West branch of Penobscot River, with liberty to take toll of 30 cents per M. was in the same course of legislation, and which affected the tracts of timber on the undivided lands in that quarter, in nearly the same degree, but was not quite so unreasonable as the other, for the petitioners proposed to purchase the privilege, by removing considerable obstructions in the river, which it was represented would cost fifteen or twenty thousand dollars.

The Committee reported leave to withdraw for want of information, which was also accepted. These projects would have had a baneful effect on the interests of both states. I was surprised to find that there were but few Gentlemen in the Legislature of Maine who appeared to have any knowledge on land subjects. As these applications may again be made, I took a tour with Dr. Rose last summer, up to the head of Penobscot west branch, and examined every part of the river from its source to its outlet, took a plan of all the obstructions and estimated the expense of removing them, which will not exceed one tenth part of the amount of the tax con-
templated by the toll named in said bills. This examination was made with the view of affording more correct information to the Legislature, that in case the application should be renewed, they may be able to act with more knowledge of facts. The time has not yet arrived for this improvement, but when it does arrive, it ought to be done at the expense of the States, previous to disposing of either timber or land. The Legislature of this Commonwealth by their Resolve dated 15th June, 1827, granted a township of land (No. 5 of the 2d range of townships north of Brigham's Kennebec tract) to the State of Maine, on condition that said State should make and construct a road, which was laid out by virtue of a resolve of this Commonwealth passed June 12th, 1817, from the north line of the State of Maine, so that travellers with their horses and carriages, may safely pass and repass thereon, and complete the same to the acceptance of the Agent of the Land Office of the Commonwealth, &c. And, by another resolve dated 20 Feb. 1828 certain alterations in the course and direction of said road, were permitted to be made, and the time was extended to November, 1830, for completing the work. The State of Maine having sold the township, granted to them as aforesaid, I was notified by the grantees, that the road was completed, and that they were desirous of having a conveyance of the land, I thought it my duty to ascertain personally the fact of its completion conformable to the terms of the grant, and accordingly I travelled from Waterville on Kennebec river, through the whole distance to Quebec in five days, equal to about 40 miles a day, and found the State's portion of the road well made, smooth and easy to travel, except about three miles over
Bald mountain, where the elevation is too precipitous for loaded teams, and hardly practicable to pass over with empty carriages, and which might have been easily avoided by passing at the foot of the mountain, conformable to the alteration, allowed by the resolve of February, 1828. It seems the contractor for this road mistook the terms of this Contract, and he is now required to make it where it ought to have been made in the first instance. As the road is made conformable to the resolve of June 1827 (that of Feb. 1828 not being imperative,) I conceive that the title to said township is fairly acquired by the State of Maine. A part of the road lying within the limits of the Brigham purchase (say about twenty miles) is extremely rough and unsafe for travellers, and until it is considerably improved, the Canada road may be considered as of little value to the community, but when the road in Brigham’s purchase is made good, it will be excellent the whole distance through to Quebec, and be very useful to the public. The citizens of St. Francis, St. Josephs, and St. Mary’s, are desirous of having a Mail Stage put on that route, and they will make exertions to accomplish it. Application has been made at this office to purchase a tract of land adjoining the Canada line, belonging to the two States over which said road passes, containing about equal to a township of six miles square, for the purpose of having a large hotel erected thereon for the accommodation of travellers. Also another application has been made for the same land, to accommodate the U. S. Frontier Custom House, &c. The applicants were referred to the Legislatures, as no authority existed elsewhere to meet their views.
Pursuant to a resolve passed 15th March last, making an appropriation for survey and making a Winter road from Metawamkeag river, to the Aroostook river, John Webber and Joseph Norris were appointed to explore that region, and ascertain the best route upon which to construct said road, to examine the Country with great care, that no mistake should be made in deciding its location. Mr. Norris died a few days after his appointment, and Rufus Gilmore was substituted in his place. They attended to the duties of their appointment, and report the whole distance from Metawamkeag river to the Aroostook river, on the line they surveyed, to be 58 miles and 5 Chains, the first 35 miles is excellent for farms and roads; from the 35th to the 40th mile trees the land is more uneven, but good for a road. The next ten miles the land is over some considerable swamp and bog, which could not be avoided, without leaving their route and going more easterly. Being out of provisions they were compelled to return. They think, upon a further examination, they can improve the direction of the Northern part of the route, but the first 45 miles is so good for a road, and the land so excellent for a settlement, no better location may be sought for. It was so late in the season before this survey could be accomplished, it left no time for those persons disposed to contract for making the road, to examine the line before the season would be passed, consequently none appeared ready to contract. We thought it best, therefore, to make a beginning, and accordingly put on the road six or seven men, whom we hired by the month, to cut out and make the road as far as they could while the season lasted.

While they were at work I visited the road, and ex-
amined their progress. They completed about seven miles in the manner we directed, with which I was well satisfied; it will serve as a sample for its continuance, both as to its structure and estimate of expense. We have advertised for proposals to make thirty miles more the next season.

I have caused township letter A., lying about fifteen miles south of Houlton, over which the Military road passes, to be surveyed into lots of One hundred acres, and have also made arrangements for having township No. 4. of the 6th range, over which the Aroostook road is surveyed, and lies about half way between the Metawamkeag and Aroostook rivers, to be surveyed into lots, early in the Spring, for the purpose of settlement, pursuant to a resolve of the 22d June last. Another resolve of the same date, authorizing the sale of timber on the streams tributary to St. John's river, I have declined executing at present, fearing that it would clash with the territory in dispute, and that some difficulty might ensue, and that it would be safer to delay, till a more propitious moment.

The net amount for timber cut on the public lands last winter, is $3,934.49—but as a considerable part of this amount was cut on townships, which were sold after the permits were granted, and before the timber came to market, it went into the hands of the purchasers of the townships, as per agreement always made in such cases, and as the amount for timber is appropriated to the opening of the Aroostook road, I have retained the balance in my hands, to meet the expenditure on said road, to be accounted for hereafter.

Since the first day of February last, the date of my last report to the Legislature, I have sold several town-
ships, and parts of townships of land, containing, in the
aggregate, 132,730 acres, for the sum of $35,499 60,
which, with the land previously sold, completes sales, to
the extent of the existing authority, for selling land South of
the monument line. I could now sell several townships
more to advantage, if I had authority for continuing
sales. I have also sold some small lots, have executed
deeds to grantees, and to several soldiers of the revolu-
tionary war, as the same have been called for, and titles
proved.

A particular detail of the sales and conveyances, re-
cceipts and disbursements, will be accounted to the Le-
gislature at the approaching session.

The public lands were kept under the constant super-
vision of some of our people, so that there was not any
trespassing of consequence attempted the last winter,
and none with success.

I am, with great respect,

Your very Humble Servant,

GEORGE W. COFFIN,

Land Agent.