

“ GENTLEMEN,—I have the honor to inform you that His Excellency the Governor  
 “ General, has been pleased to appoint you as Commissioners to visit the States of the  
 “ neighboring Union, in which prohibitory laws are, or have been, in force, to make  
 “ enquiry into the success which has attended the working of such laws, and to report  
 “ thereon, as well as on other essential facts connected with the same.

“ To F. Davis, Esquire, and

“ Rev. J. W. Manning.

Having accepted the said appointment, Your Commissioners entered upon the discharge of their duties, with an earnest desire to give to His Excellency a full and impartial report, founded on personal observation, as well as upon information received from official and other reliable sources. They commenced their labours on the 25th day of August last, and have now the honor to present to His Excellency the following report:—

In the prosecution of the enquiry, Your Commissioners visited the following States:—Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, Michigan and Ohio, in all of which they were informed a prohibitory law was then in force, and in order to arrive at a correct conclusion, they visited, in the States of Maine and Massachusetts, a considerable portion of the rural districts.

Your Commissioners also sought and obtained interviews with governors, ex-governors, secretaries of state, clergymen, officers of the army, senators, members of congress, judges of the supreme, superior, and police courts, district attorneys, mayors, ex-mayors, aldermen, overseers of the poor, selectmen, jailers, trial justices, city marshals, editors, chiefs of police, employers of labour and influential citizens. They also endeavored to obtain extracts from public documents and records, and brought with them for further reference, about one hundred and forty state and municipal documents, varying in size from twenty to over one thousand pages. Under the guidance and protection of policemen, they visited the lowest quarters of various cities in the States mentioned. They embraced every chance of going where large crowds were likely to be gathered, and in short, lost no opportunity that they thought would enable them to advance the accomplishment of their object.

Your Commissioners endeavored to gather as many statistics bearing on the enquiry as possible, but experienced great difficulty in that branch of the enquiry, inasmuch as many of the cities, more particularly Portland, Bangor, Augusta and Boston, had suffered from fires that had, to a very great extent, destroyed their public records. Your Commissioners also found that the frequent changes of the office-holders under the American system of government, is not favorable to the preservation of statistical information. These causes largely contributed to increase the labours of Your Commissioners, by compelling a search for records in the hands of private individuals; and with a few exceptions, prevented their going back, as they would have desired, to a period anterior to the passage of the prohibitory law.