

EXTENSION OF MORRILL ACTS TO THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

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Mr. Burnham, from the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, submitted the following
REPORT.

[To accompany S. 530.]

Then Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, to whom was referred the bill (S. 530) to amend an act entitled "An act donating public lands to the several States and Territories which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts," approved July 2, 1862, and the acts supplementary thereto, so as to the expand the benefits thereof to the District of Columbia, have given the same a careful consideration, with two public hearings, and beg leave to submit the following report, with the recommendation that the bill will pass without amendment.

This bill contains two provisions:

- I. Its primary purpose is to make available for the District of Colombia the annual appropriations now made to the States and Territories in accordance with the first Morrill Act of July 2, 1862, and the amendatory acts of August 30, 1890, and March 4, 1907, for the "endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college" in their respective jurisdictions, "where the leading objects shall be to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."
- II. In order to make the said appropriation immediately effective, Congress, as the legislative body for the District of Colombia, designates the George Washington University, a nonsectarian institution, to administer the appropriation under said act of Congress, as amended.

I.

There seems to be no good reason why the District of Colombia should not be included with the States and Territories, and with Hawaii and Porto Rico, in the terms and benefits of the Morrill Acts. For the purposes of the Morrill Acts the District is as a separate a territorial entity and as integral a portion of the country as an y Territory, and would , in fact, have benefitted by the Morrill Acts if its quasiterritorial form of government had not been changed by Congress.

The population of the District already exceeds the population of six or seven of the States and territories. It includes some 30,000 heads of families who still retain their residence in various States and Territories of the Union now being benefitted under the Morrill Acts. These

people are bona fide constituents of the members of Congress, and they ought not to be deprived of the privileges accorded to students elsewhere in the United States.

II.

In regard to the objections which certain nonresidents have made to the designation of the George Washington University as the institution that is administer this appropriation for the benefit of the District of Colombia, the committee would report as follows:

- (1) It was not the intention of the act of 1862 to force each State to establish a “stat” college or university in order to be qualified to administer this fund. At least six institutions on private foundations, offering the prescribed courses of study, have been so designated in the past by the legislatures of their respective States; and such action has had the approval of the Interior Department, and tacit consent of Congress, for more than a generation, as being within the letter and spirit of the Morrill Acts. Those institutions were: Yale University, Connecticut; Brown University, Rhode Island; Clemson Agricultural College, South Carolina; The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts; Rutgers Scientific School, New Jersey; and Cornell University, New York.

Connecticut and Rhode Island have since established their own state institutions, and Clemson has become a state institution; but Rutgers, Cornell, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are still private corporations, and they hold exactly the same relation to heir respective States in regard t the local application of the benefits of the Morrill Acts as the George Washington University would hold to the District of Colombia.

The purpose of these acts is to promote “the practical and liberal education of the industrial classes,” and the designations of the institution that is to administer this fund in the several States has been left by Congress and the Interior Department to the discretion of the state legislatures. Congress, as the legislative body for the District of Colombia, must therefore exercise a similar discretion in regard to the practical and local features of this bill.

By its present character the George Washington University is already subject to the visitorial and supervisory power of Congress. That charter expressly provides that the books of the university shall, “at all times, be open to the inspection or examination of the Attorney-General of the United States,” and that “when required by either House of Congress, it shall be the duty of [its] trustees to furnish any information respecting their own conduct, the state of the institution and of its finances.”

Moreover, by the terms of this bill, four federal officials would be made ex officio trustees of the university, and an annual report on all its work would have to be made to Congress.

For the purposes of the Morrill Acts this university would therefore be a public institution, to the extent required by these acts, and it could perform a much needed public service for the District of Colombia.

- (2) Upon full investigation we find that the charge that has been made in certain quarters that the George Washington University is a sectarian is without foundation, either in the charter, the organization, or the management of the present institution.

While the old Colombian University, out of which the present institution has been evolved, was under denomination auspices, the new reorganized George Washington University is unsectarian. Its revised charter expressly forbids any denominational test in the selection of its trustees, officers, or teachers. The present board of trustees contains men whose religious affiliations are with eight (8) denominations, and out of twenty-one (21) trustees there are not to exceed five (5) whose affiliation are with any one denomination. The personnel of its faculty in this regard is also exceedingly comprehensive.

- (3) The fact that at great expense the George Washington University has already developed certain of the forms of practical education called for in the Morrill Acts and that it could not continue this particular kind of work unless additional funds are not forthcoming, so far from being a valid objection to this bill, is, in our judgement, an excellent reason for passing it.

In accordance with the intention and the express terms of the first Morrill Act the bill makes this annual appropriation available for the District in order that it may be used for the "endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college" that will provide the very forms of education which the George Washington University has begun to provide along the lines of the Morrill Acts.

- (4) This bill would not involve any precedent for granting a similar appropriation to any other institution in the District, in common with the States and Territories, would receive only one appropriation each year. If the other local institutions should decide to enter the field covered by these acts, Congress, if it is so desired, could divide this appropriation among the several universities of the District, or it could continue to concentrate it on one institution with a view to making the appropriation available of the District under the Morrill Acts, no similar appropriation could be granted to another university.

The George Washington University is already complying with the terms of the Morrill Acts. As your committee is informed, it has established a college of engineering and the mechanic arts, and also schools of architecture and pharmacy; and it is prepared to offer full courses in the mechanic areas and otherwise to comply with the requirements of the Morrill Acts.

The term "the mechanic arts," as shown in the reports of the Commissioner of Education, includes mechanical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, mining engineering, chemical engineering, sanitary engineering, textile engineering, general engineering, architecture, household economy, chemistry, pharmacy, and general science. The George Washington University is giving instruction in all these subjects, except mining, sanitary, and textile engineering and in household economy. From an examination of the acts known collectively as the "Morrill acts," it is apparent that the teaching of agriculture in its several branches is by no means the only object for which the so-called "agricultural colleges" were established. In the

curriculum prescribed for these colleges, the teaching of the mechanic arts is placed on an equal footing with the teaching of agriculture. The English language and military tactics are also expressly mentioned, while even classical studies are not excluded.

That the intention of the late Senator Morrill was “to give a chance of the industrial classes of the country to obtain a liberal education” is abundantly proven from his published speeches; and this broad interpretation has guided the Bureau of Education, as is shown in the circular letter of instructions issued to officials of the land-grant institutions. Senator Morrill’s own comprehensive title for these institutions was “colleges for the advancement of general scientific and industrial education.”

On the agricultural side, the George Washington University, as required by the Morrill acts, is giving instruction in certain “subjects related to agriculture,” namely, botany, zoology, and chemistry. In addition, it has established a college of veterinary medicine, one of the most important of the agricultural science. That college has doubled its number of students in two years, and gives promise of great usefulness to this region. If this bill is passed, the university also proposes to introduce a general course in agronomy and one in horticulture, and we are assured that it is ready to develop its work along the lines of agricultural science as rapidly as may be called for by the needs of the young people in the District of Columbia, and that it will go as far in that direction as Congress may hereafter require.

Inasmuch as the proposed legislation would not diminish in the least the sums now being paid to other institutions, and for the reasons detailed above, your committee believe that the bill should become a law.