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NEWSLETTER of the MIDWEST ARCHIVES CONFERENCE

MAINE STATE ARCHIVES FACES ELIMINATION!

S.A.A. members assembled at the annual business meeting approved a resolution mandating the SAA Council to investigate a report that a management analysis firm had recommended to the Governor of Maine that the State Archives be abolished. According to David Horn, editor of The New Archivist and author of the resolution, this company has recommended the closing of some twenty state archives and the allocation of their functions to other state agencies. Since the firm, Warren King and Associates, Inc., is located in Chicago, the recommendations of these consultants might gravely affect many MAC members. Any additional information anyone can supply would be greatly appreciated.

Probably most of those who voted in favor of Horn's resolution did so out of a visceral reaction rather than on the basis of much factual information. The section of the report of the Maine Management and Cost Survey Commission relating to the archives follows. The facts are not reassuring.

The Commission, established by the legislature and endorsed by Governor Curtis, submitted its report in September. Stressing the need for economical operation of the state government, the report, if implemented, would have a profoundly adverse affect on offices such as the State Archives, which serve the scholarly as opposed to the economic interests of the state. The whole tenor of the report stresses business-like efficiency at the expense of the historical heritage of the state of Maine. In his introduction, the Chairman of the Commission praised "the outstanding financial support and donation of manpower made by the Maine business community," and he declared that: "We have in this study effort, been concerned not with convincing government to adopt different goals but rather with forming a partnership that will make available to government the experience and technical expertise of business."

Clearly the saving of taxpayers' money is a worthwhile goal, but as you read the report we think you will see that the Commission sacrificed Clio for coin. The section of the Commission's report dealing with the Archives is reprinted below in full. It likewise reveals an appalling subordination of history to fiscal "efficiency." After you have read the report you are urgently requested to consider (1) writing to the Governor of Maine: Gov. Kenneth Curtis, State House, Augusta, Maine 04330, telephone number (207)-289-3531 protesting the Commission's recommendations and (2) letting the MAC officers and council know what official action the conference should take.

(Text of report on pages 25-26)