

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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September 1, 1955

Honorable John H. Reed
Governor of Maine
State House
Augusta, Maine

Dear Governor Reed:

Relative to the petitions for referendum filed on the so-called Sunday Sale of Liquor Bill, you have asked the following question: "Is it lawful for the Governor to authorize inspection of the petitions by interested parties?" The answer to this question is obviously in the affirmative. Our Court in an Opinion of the Justices, 115 Me. at 579, stated:

"We think under this constitutional amendment the implied power to receive such evidence exists in the Governor, to whom it must 'appear' that not less than ten thousand electors have addressed him by petition, to inquire into and ascertain whether that number have addressed him and whether forgeries have been practiced upon him. If he finds after due notice to the interested parties and especially to the verifying petitioner, the truth of whose verification is at stake, that forged signatures have been filed with him, it is his duty to reject them."

Quite obviously it would not be possible for any interested party to ascertain if there have been forged signatures or any other discrepancies in the petitions if they were not allowed to

inspect them. It must follow that any interested party may inspect the petitions under proper supervision by the Office of the Secretary of State in whose custody the petitions are entrusted.

Very truly yours,

George C. Nest
Deputy Attorney General

GCH/dh