

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

SEVENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE

HOUSE

NO. 396

House of Representatives, Mar. 2, 1911.

*Reported by Mr. Kelleher from Committee on Appropriations
and Financial Affairs and ordered printed under joint rules.*

C. C. HARVEY, Clerk.

STATE OF MAINE

RÉSOLVE, in favor of the Children's Protective Society of
Portland.

Resolved: That the sum of five hundred dollars for the
2 year nineteen hundred eleven and five hundred dollars for
3 the year nineteen hundred twelve be and hereby is appro-
4 priated to be paid the Children's Protective Society of Port-
5 land, to assist the said society in its work in the protection
6 and care of dependent and neglected children.

STATEMENT OF FACTS TO ACCOMPANY RESOLVE
IN FAVOR OF CHILDREN'S PROTECTIVE SOCIETY
OF PORTLAND.

ORGANIZATION: The society was originally organized in 1902 under the name of Children's Protective Board, as a branch of the Associated Charities of Portland, but owing to the growth of its work and in order that it might have a more definite legal status for purposes of court procedure, it was reorganized on the 18th of February, 1908, as a charitable corporation under the provisions of chapter 53 of the Revised Statutes of 1903, for the following purposes:

PURPOSES: The purposes of this Society are to aid in all appropriate ways destitute, neglected or delinquent children, and to protect them, when necessary, against cruelty and abuse, to seek out and investigate cases requiring attention, to find permanent homes for such children in private families, to assist in the enforcement of existing legislation for the benefit of such children and to secure additional legislation in their behalf when the same shall be required. It is the aim of this society to avoid institutional work in the care of neglected and dependent children so far as possible, and to follow the modern and approved methods as exemplified in the work of the Children's Aid Society of Boston, Massachusetts. The officers of the society do not intend to establish any Home or institution for the carrying on of this work; or to call upon the State for money for such purposes. The society has never prior to last year asked for any state aid and does not favor in general the state subsidy system, and does not intend to ask for state aid in the future if its work can possibly be maintained by private contribution, as we hope and believe it can be. But the sum requested, \$500.00 per annum, the same amount as received by it from the state for the last two years, is greatly needed by the society at the present time and is no more than is necessary to enable it to carry out and illustrate in the State of Maine, the Massachusetts system of direct placing of children in homes as much as possible, and it is believed that the adoption and extension of this practice in the State of Maine will result in the future in a great financial saving as well as great improvement in the method of caring for

dependent children, by eliminating the effects of institutional life, and restoring such children to the atmosphere of the home and the normal life of the community.

WORK: During the last two years over one thousand cases have been investigated by the society, principally through its agent, Mary S. Burnham, and 543 of these cases were dealt with during the year last past. Sixty-two children were placed in permanent free homes and the society has at the present time in its custody or is responsible for about 219 children. The work done by the society is of two kinds.

First. Work outside the court by investigation, friendly intervention, mediation and advice. The work outside the court includes such work as inducing a father to provide for his family by paying a weekly sum to wife or agent, inducing parents by solicitation or through fear of legal action to place their children with relatives or in an institution temporarily until home conditions can be bettered, bringing about reconciliations between parents for the benefit of the children, inspecting factories and stores to ascertain if the compulsory school laws are being violated, visiting dance halls and causing their discontinuance if objectionable, investigating dives and causing the police department to close them, and rescuing young girls therefrom.

Second. Cases that have to be brought into court by legal process and disposed of by order of court, placing the children in some appropriate institution or suitable private family; the ultimate aim being in all cases to provide permanent free homes by adoption or otherwise for the children, thus giving them the benefit of the atmosphere of home life and care in preference to the institutional life.

The following cases may serve to illustrate the nature of the work accomplished:

A girl of twelve found helplessly intoxicated in the public street requiring medical treatment to save her life, the liquor being obtained in her own home where parent and sister of thirteen were addicted to it. Girl was placed temporarily in institution and afterwards restored to parents; whole family was reformed.

An infant six weeks old, the second illegitimate child of a young woman who was a confirmed inebriate with a police court

record and utterly devoid of the moral sense, the child neglected in every way, with its eyes closed by a foul sexual disease and in immediate danger of total blindness, the mother refusing the aid of a physician. The City Physician sent a prescription for the eyes which the mother did not have filled. The child was sent to the hospital, its eyes treated and saved, and it was then placed in a home where it is now doing well.

A young girl sixteen years old turned away from her home by her parents, living alone in a deserted house, living a life of vice, weakened and sick, without change of clothing or food except such as was brought or obtained by the men who visited her for immoral purposes. Placed temporarily in an institution and finally restored to her family.

A six year old boy living with a man and woman who proved to be unmarried, the child being illegitimate, placed with them to board by its father, the boy was being cruelly abused, beaten over the head and had one eye nearly closed as the result of a blow. Boy removed to a home and is now happy and thriving.

Two little girls, mother dead, father away all day, left to care for themselves and younger brothers, no food in the house, conditions filthy, immoral and indecent; one of the girls requiring treatment at the temporary home, from which she was placed out in a family and is now becoming a good and useful woman.

The society is in need of funds for the following purposes: In many cases where children are first discovered by the agent in a needy and destitute condition immediate assistance is required for the child in the way of food, clothing or medicine. Some of the most distressing cases which are brought to the attention of the charitable workers in our city or county have been discovered by the agent in this way, and at times the society is without the necessary funds to furnish these immediate supplies.

Again, the society has no established home or institution. Frequently no existing institution can be found ready at once to take a child whose surroundings by reason of cruelty or neglect require his immediate removal to a proper home and no private family can be found willing to adopt the child. Consequently for some days and sometimes weeks, the child has to be entrusted temporarily to the care of the agent who has no suitable place in which to keep it. Funds are needed, there-

fore, to pay the board of such children in temporary receiving homes, that is in families who agree with the society to take a certain number of children in such emergency cases and board them for short periods of time at low rates till permanent homes can be found; also after permanent homes have been found in private families, careful supervision and inspection is necessary in order to ascertain whether the child is being properly supported, cared for and educated. This work also necessitates the expenditure of money for travelling expenses and services of an agent.

Finally, in order to procure permanent free homes for the children it is necessary to advertise extensively in the newspapers of the state. All these needs require funds in order to enable the society adequately to carry out its purposes.

ROBERT WHITEHOUSE,

President.