

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

HOUSE

NO. 200

House of Representatives, Feb. 9, 1917.

*Referred to Committee on Education and two thousand
copies ordered printed. Sent up for concurrence.*

W. R. ROIX, Clerk.

Presented by Mr. Brewster of Portland.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

AN ACT to regulate the time for beginning fall term of schools.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

The Fall term of all common schools and all educational
2 institutions, receiving State aid, shall commence not earlier
3 than the 21st day of September in each year.

STATEMENT OF FACTS.

Re "An Act to regulate the time for beginning fall term of schools."

June is no longer a vacation month; cause, cold and wet.

The actual length of the summer business is six weeks.

The estimated amount of money left in the state by summer visitors is reckoned to be between \$40,000,000 and \$45,000,000 of dollars and much nearer the latter figure.

The estimated value of the summer business to Portland is \$5,000,000; this is reckoned by many as a very conservative figure. In investigating this, found business houses whose sales from June 20th to Sept. 20, overrun by \$60,000 any other three months in the year. Sebago Lake is estimated by business men who do business there to be \$30,000 for the city. Other cities like Biddeford and Saco double their business through the vacation months.

The benefits derived by the electric railroads is very large and were it not for the summer business, some of them could not exist and would be out of commission.

Could the vacation period be extended through the month of September, our farmers living adjacent to our mountains, lakes and sea shores could find a market for their crops, especially vegetables, butter and eggs. Spring planting grows later each year, which throws the harvesting later into September. Could the vacation period be extended through the month of September, the farmers would receive a remunerative price for their products. Under present conditions, the summer tourists have left the state on account of the opening of the schools, and they are left with a large part of their crops upon their hands, to be disposed of at a price named by the middle man.

Another important factor in our state and one that requires immediate attention, is the employment of summer help. The large part of the help employed by hotel and other business houses, are teachers, high school and college students. This class of help is preferable and especially for dining rooms.

Thousands are employed from Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont, the latter state sending many into Maine. Through this employment thousands secure funds to enable them to pay their way through normal schools to fit them for teachers. Many teachers take advanced studies through other schools and colleges to fit themselves for positions in higher grade schools. The wages of these employees are good, and the tipping system in a large majority of cases overrun their salaries two to four-fold, as is estimated to average \$80.00 for the season, over their regular pay. This help cannot remain longer than Labor Day. They will not sign up for longer than on or about that date. This is a financial hardship to both employer and employees. The help would like to stay at least three weeks longer, as it would mean much to them, but they must leave to take their schools, and the students to their studies. The result is, business must close, and in many instances houses are left with no help at a time when it cannot be procured. Could these houses have at least three weeks longer, business there would be less failures, which not only wrecks the proprietors of these houses but is felt by all in the community who cater to this trade. Many hotels and business houses are trying to eliminate this class of help, and in some instances they have not been employed when other help could be had. This is a hardship that should not exist, and unless remedied, it will be the means of throwing out of employment thousands of teachers and students during the summer months.

The opening and closing of schools is varied, commencing June 2nd and then on to June 25th. The opening in the fall commences a day or two after Labor Day, and continues on until as late as the 25th. Now the Uniform School Law Commission think this can be obviated by having a definite date for closing in June, run the schools up later in this month, which is done in some places in our state. Put these days that under the present system is loss, to both business and scholar, over into September these lost days can be utilized by both business and employees. Open the fall term not earlier than Sept. 21st. This will give at least three weeks more business for all concerned, and with no loss in the education of our children. These students will then have the benefit of the most beautiful month of the year, and be

better prepared to take up their arduous studies of the present system of teaching. There has been at least one thousand interviews among all classes of people during the year, and find 95 per cent. favorable to the month of September as a vacation month for their children.

Times and seasons are changing, even to get more daylight for business, and in the near future the clock will be set back one hour. Planting in the spring grows later each year. Where cottagers five years ago would come to our state in early June, they now remain away until late in the month on account of the unfavorable weather of this month. June is not what she used to be, and is now reckoned upon as the preparatory month instead of May. Again there are days during the school year, which could be profitably used, which would help materially in providing the requisite number of school weeks required by law.

Teachers who live away from their homes would prefer to be employed without so many breaks as they would save at least two weeks' board and could be employed three weeks longer which would mean much to the now underpaid teacher.

In many instances school authorities are advocating a longer school year, some advocating fifty weeks some 40. There is a deep-under-current running among the people, not only in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, but throughout the west and middle west for a longer vacation. The movement for a longer term of school is being made without any reference to the (parents) and if the signs of the future can be read, the parent will expect to have something to say about the education of their children. Oct. 1st was not the date set by the U. S. L. Com. but by the parents themselves as the vote of the retail merchants will show. Maine is being advertised throughout the world as the nation's play ground. Thousands of dollars are being spent in advertising. Millions are being spent in building good roads to attract the auto tourists into our state. Hotels are being built unequaled in any part of the globe. Thousands more are being appropriated to stock our lakes, ponds and brooks to tempt the lovers of this sport to call upon us. Thousands more is spent in protecting our game. All this is being done for the specific purpose of enticing the lovers of these sports to come to our state. We find a difference of opinion of the justice of the

choice we have made as a state. Would it have been better to have made Maine a manufacturing state is a question that has been raised. Providence and nature has been the architect of Maine and her adaptability for just what we are using her for is receiving the approbation of the millions who have come to our shores. We are spending too much money for the little time we give them to remain with us and we think that after a careful investigation of this question, you will agree with us, that we should have at least three weeks more time for business, when all it will cost will be the rearrangement of the school law, which will mean no less to the student, and a big asset to the thousands in our state who directly receive a benefit from the summer business of Maine. The National Play Ground.

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