

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEVENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

HOUSE

NO. 246

House of Representatives, Feb. 13, 1917.

Printed under joint rules.

W. R. ROIX, Clerk.

Presented by Mr. Rowe of Yarmouth.

STATE OF MAINE

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

AN ACT to establish a Legislative Reference Bureau in the
State Library.

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

Section 1. The state librarian is hereby authorized to
2 establish in the state library a legislative reference bureau
3 which shall collect, arrange, and place on file books, pamph-
4 lets and other material relating to legislation, shall prepare
5 abstracts of laws in other states and present such other in-
6 formation as may be useful and necessary to the legislature
7 in the performance of its legislative duties.

Sect. 2. The state librarian shall employ such assistance
2 and incur such expense as may be necessary for the proper
3 administration of the bureau.

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STATEMENT OF FACTS.

The need of a special department in the State Library exclusively for legislative reference work is apparent upon very superficial consideration. The expense involved, considering the benefit derived, would be small. Much of the material to be gathered costs nothing, and the larger part of an appropriation for this special purpose would be spent in the actual work of collecting, arranging, indexing, briefing, condensing and making available to the public the information collected.

Twenty-three states of the union have separate departments or bureaus devoted exclusively to legislative reference work, and ten other states through their state libraries or universities do special work in this line.

The State Library contains many volumes and documents whose value would be greatly increased if they were indexed. For instance, no provision was ever made for indexing the Legislative Record, but since 1907 it has been indexed at the State Library by legislative order. The volumes issued previous to this date, namely, 1897, 1899, 1901, 1903 and 1905, have never been indexed. It would be possible to place all this work under the direction of the legislative reference bureau.