

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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NINETY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 233

S. P. 177

In Senate, January 28, 1949.

Referred to Committee on Public Utilities. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

CHESTER T. WINSLOW, Secretary.

Presented by Senator Noyes of Hancock.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
FORTY-NINE

AN ACT Relating to Suspension of Public Utility Rates.

Emergency preamble. Whereas, the maintenance and efficient operation of public utilities services is of vital importance to the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; and

Whereas, the determination of just and reasonable rates is essential to such maintenance and efficient operation, as well as to the pecuniary interests of the consumer; and

Whereas, the present nation-wide inflationary trend in operating expenses has produced an unprecedented flood of rate cases requiring extensive investigation by the public utilities commission; and

Whereas, the present abnormal conditions require an extension of the suspension periods permitted for such investigations, in order that proposed rate increases may not become automatically effective without sufficient investigation; and

Whereas, it is essential that such extension be made seasonably for application to certain suspension periods currently in progress; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the constitution of Maine and require the

following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

R. S., c. 40, § 34, amended. The 2nd paragraph of section 34 of chapter 40 of the revised statutes is hereby amended to read as follows:

'Pending such investigation and order the commission may at any time within said period preceding the effective date of any such schedule, by filing with such schedule and delivering to the public utility affected thereby a statement of its reasons for said suspension, suspend the operation of such schedule or any part thereof, but not for a longer period than 3 months from the date of said order of suspension; provided, however, that if said investigation cannot be concluded within said period of 3 months said commission may in its discretion extend the time of suspension for a further period of ~~3~~ 5 months; and provided further, that nothing in this section contained shall apply to any schedule filed with the commission and proposing any change or changes in any new rate, joint rate, fare, rental, toll, classification, charge, rule, regulation or form of contract or agreement affecting the transportation of freight.'

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this act shall take effect when approved.