

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS AND RESOLVES
AS PASSED BY THE
Ninety-first and Ninety-second
Legislatures
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

From April 10, 1943 to April 21, 1945
AND MISCELLANEOUS STATE PAPERS
From April 10, 1943 to May 24, 1945

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ADDRESS

of

Governor Sumner Sewall

to

SPECIAL SESSION

of the

91ST MAINE LEGISLATURE

September 18, 1944

ADDRESS

Mr. President and Members of the 91st Legislature:

In the regular session of the 90th Legislature a general revision of the public laws of the State was authorized and a committee created to undertake the work. After various vicissitudes and by the determined effort of your present able committee and our present industrious Revisor of Statutes, this work has now been brought to completion. Accordingly, I have been happy to convene this session in order that you may consider enacting this revision into law.

In your regular session of 1943 you directed that certain plans be made for the postwar period and you set aside \$1,000,000 for the construction of such projects as might meet with your subsequent approval. You clearly visualized that there might be problems of temporary unemployment during the transition from the economy of war to that of peace. It was your hope and mine that by careful planning the State could build certain needed structures at a time when this work would fill a definite need for jobs and prove of utmost benefit to our Maine people.

In my opinion this period for new construction is nearly at hand and the time for legislative authorization of certain projects is here. The victorious advance of our armed forces across the face of Europe and across the Pacific strongly indicates that substantial reconversion of our productive industries to a peacetime basis will soon be permitted. In all probability this will occur before the work of the regular session of the coming winter will have been completed. It is entirely possible that this will come even before the session assembles to undertake its work.

For this reason I am recommending for your immediate consideration two plans that have been submitted to the Development Commission at your direction and are now in form for your approval.

One of these calls for the construction of additional dormitories at our Pownal State School. In my opinion, this is an extremely urgent project which should be "ready to go" at the earliest possible time war conditions permit.

For several years available space in this institution has been crowded. More recently there has been a waiting list of very serious proportions. We know from our records that there are some four hundred Maine families currently enduring the tragic misfortune of maintaining within the family group a mentally defective child. Furthermore, we have reason to believe that there are many others who would normally approach the State with this problem were it not for the fact that they realize it is a hopeless errand due to lack of space.

I think we all agree that this situation is morally wrong and socially extravagant from the standpoint of the family, the community, and the

State. That the war has prevented our relieving this condition at an earlier date is regrettable. Clearly it now should be corrected with the least possible delay.

To meet this problem the Department of Institutional Service has developed plans for two new dormitories; one for 200 boys and another for 200 girls. Also there is provision for expansion of the heating plant and reservoir in order to service these new facilities.

Preliminary plans of these buildings are now completed. Legislative authorization and an appropriation at this time will assure actual construction as soon as war conditions permit.

You have already taken similar action for the employees' building at this institution. Together these projects represent a well-rounded and orderly construction program to meet existing needs.

I am aware that this matter might be handled at the coming regular session under an emergency clause, but it would seem to me advisable to avoid emergency legislation whenever possible. I am recommending, therefore, that you allocate at this time from the postwar fund \$435,000 for the completion of these much needed buildings at Pownal State School—work to be started at the earliest possible moment.

There is another sizable project of an entirely different nature which I believe merits your thoughtful consideration at this time. I have in mind the postwar fish rearing plans submitted by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Game. In my opinion this program promises many new jobs while in the construction stage and offers tremendous long-term employment and business opportunities for our citizens after completion. The Department is confident that new license revenues resulting directly from this program will carry within a very few years both the operating and amortization costs of these new stations.

While the original long-range plans submitted to the Maine Development Commission called for the construction of ten new stations the Commission recommends that half of this program, or five stations, be undertaken next spring, war permitting.

I am happy to report that our fish and game license revenues did not fall off during the war years as anticipated, with the result that the Department now has an accumulated surplus of \$270,000. This can be used without further legislative authorization for the construction of three of these recommended new stations. I am now proposing that \$200,000 be allotted from the postwar fund for two additional stations. If you act favorably on this proposal at this time these five new stations can be started when the frost is out of the ground early next spring; they will be completed next September; fish can be reared to legal length the following winter and

will be ready for release in the summer season of 1946. According to present indications it would seem probable that this will be the year when the greatest number of our veterans will be returning as well as the first big recreational postwar year.

This will be the year therefore when it will be tremendously important to have abundant business and employment opportunities for our veterans. Unquestionably this will be the year to impress our visitors with superlative fishing in Maine. Let us remember that an enthusiastic customer is the greatest asset any business can have and that only successful businesses provide real and permanent employment.

I would remind you that the development of the fish resources of our inland waters is exclusively the business of Maine State Government. No private citizen can undertake this development for private gain. It behooves us, therefore, to be alert and intelligent managers of this business entrusted to us by our citizens.

Again I point out that we must start building these rearing stations early this coming spring—before the regular session has completed its work—if our product is to be ready for our customers in 1946. It takes time to produce legal size fish. It takes enterprise and capital expenditure to produce jobs and business opportunities.

In view of all these factors I feel that I would be remiss in my duty toward our returning veterans if I failed to recommend strongly that you act favorably on this proposal at this time.

One other matter I wish to draw to your attention. In 1941 the 90th Legislature authorized and directed the construction of a State Office Building to provide adequate space for our present activities of State government. In the course of planning for this building it has become evident that two buildings would serve better our purpose and prove less expensive than the one originally contemplated. Your Building Commission is therefore proposing at this time certain amendments to this private and special law. These entail no appropriation. I recommend their passage.

I feel sure that these three proposals which I have covered are sufficiently known to you that I need not dwell on them at greater length. None of them conflicts with approval of the Revision of Statutes. All of them deal with problems on which timely action is the essence. To relieve human suffering in the family burdened with defective children, and to create jobs and opportunities for returning veterans and for others who may need them, seem to me to be vitally important matters. I am confident that you too will recognize them as extremely urgent and in the public interest.

SUMNER SEWALL,
Governor.