

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS AND RESOLVES

AS PASSED BY THE

One Hundred and First Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

Published by the Director of Legislative Research in accordance with the Revised Statutes of 1954, Chapter 10, Section 27, Subsection VI.

The Knowlton and McLeary Company
Farmington, Maine
1963

Message
of
Governor John H. Reed
to the
Special Session
One Hundredth Legislature
November 27, 1961

MESSAGE OF JOHN H. REED, GOVERNOR OF MAINE, TO THE
JOINT CONVENTION OF THE ONE HUNDREDTH LEGISLATURE
OF THE STATE OF MAINE

November 27, 1961

Mr. President, and Members of the 100th Legislature:

It is my privilege this afternoon to welcome you back to Augusta for the purpose of considering matters which are of serious importance to the people of Maine.

As you are well aware it is the prerogative of the Governor to call the Legislature into special session if he determines legislative action is necessary on matters of an emergency nature, which cannot reasonably await the next regular session of this body.

My decision to call you back was made only after much deliberation and after consultation with our most competent legal authorities.

When it became apparent that certain problems I shall presently outline could not be resolved without legislative authority I felt it was in the best interests of the people of Maine to request your action on them at this special session.

The proposals you will be asked to consider impose responsibilities upon both the Governor and the Legislature; and we owe it to the citizens of Maine, whether they are directly or indirectly affected, to give these proposals that full consideration which can be given only in a legislative session.

I would respectfully state that I believe you should continually bear in mind the accepted purpose of a special session — namely, that it be limited to emergency measures.

Currently scheduled for your consideration are sixty-two matters. In addition to the three items in my official proclamation your legislative leaders have selected fifty-nine measures deemed to be of an urgent nature.

In our approach to these problems, let us not be divided by party lines or factions, but from the outset let us resolve to turn to the task at hand in a workmanlike manner and accomplish our assignment with efficiency and dispatch.

Educational Foundation Allowance

The first matter I would direct your attention to is the necessity of providing funds for the Educational Foundation Program. Your approval of Legislative Document 1206 at the regular session clearly indicated your intent concerning this measure. However, inadvertently the money was not appropriated. Fortunately the sum of \$1,210,971 is currently anticipated for allocation to this account.

In order that our municipalities may be assured this money will be available to them when they qualify for it, I strongly recommend that one of your first acts be the passage of this bill.

Legislative Apportionment

Let us now turn to the subject of legislative apportionment.

I am absolutely certain that no member had the slightest intent of disenfranchising a single Maine voter. Again, through a human error, a number of our people were faced with that possibility.

Since this oversight can only be corrected by legislative action, I am confident you will want to rectify the situation by prompt enactment of the appropriate legislation.

Educational Television

The third matter I wish to discuss with you is educational television.

Since your adjournment in June no other state issue has evoked as much public discussion as this. I am sure that a great deal of your time here will be spent on this program.

Because I am aware that you are already familiar with the merits of this great new educational medium, I do not feel it necessary to reiterate its many advantages.

One of the most impelling reasons we should act favorably on this proposal now is the distinct possibility that one or more of the remaining very high frequency channels may become permanently assigned for commercial use. The preponderance of evidence reaching my desk indicates we do need Channel 7 in Calais as well as Channels 12 in Orono and 10 in Presque Isle to fully implement the network.

During recent months I have been in frequent contact with the Federal Communications Commission in an attempt to save Channel 7 for educational television purposes. It is my firm opinion the time has now arrived when we must demonstrate to the Commission that we are more than passively interested in an educational television network.

I feel sure the conclusion you reach will have a definite bearing on the Commission's final decision.

A phase of educational television that concerns all of us is the overall cost, both from the standpoint of original investment and future operational expenses.

In order that we might have the most accurate cost estimate possible I appointed a ten member committee to thoroughly research the question of costs quite apart from the merits of educational television.

This group of well-qualified Maine people have done an outstanding job and I know you will want to carefully study their report.

They unanimously agreed on an estimate of \$1,400,000 for capital expenditures to establish the remainder of the Maine network. They further agreed that organizational costs would approximate \$50,000 per year.

On estimated annual operating expenses for 35 to 40 hours of televised programs per week the committee was divided. Eight members estimated \$280,000, while two believed the figure would be \$415,000 annually. These figures are exclusive of debt service.

After studying the cost reports and weighing the factors involved I have concluded that a Bond Issue of \$1,500,000 to be retired in ten years would adequately finance the original installations and other needs until the next regular legislative session. With the adoption of this plan, and with July 1, 1962 as the date of the bond sale, \$22,500 should be appropriated from the Unappropriated Surplus of the General Fund to meet the interest payment for the current biennium.

Since the question of bonding must be submitted to referendum, all voters would have an opportunity to express themselves on educational television.

The implementation of an educational television network for the State of Maine will undoubtedly be one of the greatest contributions to education in our era.

I stand solidly in support of this proposal and respectfully urge your favorable consideration in order that all Maine people may receive the advantages of this revolutionary new educational medium. The opportunity is now in your hands!

Status of General Fund

It is appropriate at this point, to review briefly the current financial condition of the State particularly in respect to revenues. I am certain you will want to know precisely where we stand before allocating any funds.

Current Operations:

During the first four months of the current fiscal year, the actual General Fund Undedicated Revenue has exceeded estimates by \$457,527. This is a 2.15 percent increase over estimates. Included in this amount are Agricultural Stipend Funds of \$150,221, as of November 15, 1961, which will be withdrawn and credited to the Department of Agriculture for distribution to those Agricultural Fairs qualifying for stipend moneys. Also included is an amount of \$71,129 which will be returned to the race licensees. After this deduction, the General Fund Balance will be \$236,177 or a 1.11 percent increase of revenues over estimates.

The foregoing clearly indicates how close estimates are to actual receipts. What is not indicated, however, is the significant fact that three of our basic

and most productive sources of revenue are showing minus balances for the four month period ending on October 30, 1961.

These three sources are the Sales and Use Tax down \$396,290; the Cigarette Tax, down \$90,800 and the net profit received from liquor and beer, down \$96,959.

Obviously in view of these facts, any attempt to again increase revenue estimates would be fiscally unsound and would not meet with my favor.

Surplus:

The balance of General Fund Unappropriated Surplus available as of June 30, 1961 is \$1,487,453. From this amount we must reserve \$450,000 to replenish the Contingent Account. Also a sum of \$86,500 must be reserved for the Group Life Insurance Fund. There are balances of \$80,904 in the General Fund that if allowed to lapse would bring the total balance to \$1,031,857.

It is my firm opinion that appropriations at this Special Session should not exceed \$1,031,000.

Urgent Major Legislation

There are a limited number of other measures I would like to comment on at this time. I have selected these because I believe they are either state-wide in nature or affect large numbers of Maine people.

Municipal Sewerage Grants:

The first request is to provide additional funds for state grants to municipalities for sewerage treatment plants.

During the regular session you appropriated \$630,000 for this purpose. However, due to the fact an increased number of communities are in the process of, or will be constructing treatment plants it is anticipated the demands on this account will exceed the amount available. It is estimated by state officials that \$500,000 will be needed to meet our share.

Surely all of us are pleased to see substantial progress made in the orderly abatement of pollution in Maine waters. In order that we keep faith with our municipalities who qualify for treatment plant funds I definitely favor a sufficient appropriation to this account.

Civil Defense:

An area in which the priority of need has increased immensely since we last met is that of Civil Defense and Public Safety.

The aggressive forces of Communism are challenging and testing our will and strength as a nation with a determination that exceeds anything in our experience.

Our national security can be tremendously improved and a present crucial gap in our defenses closed by a truly effective Civil Defense Program.

Although the Federal Government has a major function in the objective of adequate Civil Defense for every American, nevertheless, it is evident federal officials are looking for action at the state, local and individual level.

It is abundantly clear our State must take positive action to establish a suitable Emergency Operating Center to house State Government and Civil Defense under disaster conditions.

The recommended site for this center is at Farmington State Teachers College. The proposed structure has been designed so it can eventually be converted into a foundation for a college building. It has been estimated the cost of this facility will be \$193,200.

We hope it will never be needed, but we cannot risk the chance that it will not.

I strongly recommend the passage of this legislation.

Sardine Season:

The sardine packing industry which provides a major source of income to many of our coastal communities is experiencing a very unsatisfactory season.

It is estimated the pack this year is approximately 30 percent of normal. Many Maine workers depend upon employment in the packing houses for their livelihood and the adverse season is working a great hardship on them. Also when our supply is exhausted Maine sardines will lose their shelf space in the markets of the nation to the foreign product and this shelf space will be difficult to regain in another year.

While there is a difference of opinion in this matter, our State Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries recommends an extension in the season. I concur with that recommendation.

Additional Legislation

There are a number of other worthy measures dealing mostly with local problems and a few of more general interest. These items, together with those I have discussed, are included in the Legislative Documents the legislative leaders of both parties arranged for advanced printing.

Since these are now in your possession it would not seem logical to discuss each of them in detail this afternoon.

State Employees Pay Plan

There is one other problem to which I wish to direct your attention.

At the regular session, this Legislature voted to implement certain features of the new pay plan for State employees. Because of insufficient funds, inequities have resulted affecting a large number of our deserving State workers.

I am certain we all agree our loyal State employees should be adequately and fairly compensated for their services.

I urge your cooperation in resolving this matter by appropriate legislative action.

Conclusion

It is my sincere hope you will find it possible to limit legislation to measures of a genuine urgent nature and refrain from introducing proposals which, while desirable, can await a regular session.

If we can quickly agree on the problems outlined, provide the funds, and adjourn, the best interests of the public will have been served.

We have just had the privilege once again of observing Thanksgiving, one of our most beloved holidays.

Soon we will be busy with the activities of the Christmas season when the spirit of "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men" prevails. I urge you to allow this spirit to permeate this session, forget personal differences, forget party lines and work together to prove to our citizens that we are here to serve the welfare of our State and for no other reason.

By adopting this attitude you can accomplish the task before you in a limited time and return to your homes knowing you have faced responsibility and completed the job in a satisfactory manner.

JOHN H. REED
Governor of Maine