

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS AND RESOLVES

AS PASSED BY THE

One Hundred and Third Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

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Message
of
Governor John H. Reed
to the
Special Session
One Hundred and Second Legislature
January 17 - February 9, 1966

**MESSAGE OF JOHN H. REED, GOVERNOR OF MAINE, TO THE
JOINT CONVENTION OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SECOND
LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MAINE—SPECIAL SESSION**

January 17, 1966

Mr. President, and Members of the 102nd Legislature :

I am pleased to welcome all of you back to the Capitol for this important special session. A number of emergency situations have arisen that require legislative action.

Most of you are engaged in the many new challenges of 1966, but all of you, I know, recognize your responsibility to the citizens of Maine, and for that reason you have responded to my special session call.

The invigorating chill of January and the spectacular beauty of the earth's snow blanket combine this time of year to change the face of Maine from a summer playground into a winter wonderland.

As our seasons change, we must also change — we must adapt — prepare in advance for the things we know will surely come, for the things we hope will come to improve this great State of ours.

And so it is with us here today — we must prepare. The task of getting ready for the changing climate in the affairs of our State has been delegated to us by the Maine voters. Even in this relatively brief special session, we must map a plan that will let us put our assets to the most beneficial use.

It is the duty of the Governor to call the Legislature into session when legislative action is necessary on matters that cannot reasonably await the next regular meeting of this body.

It is my desire that each of us bears in mind that the express purpose of this session is to consider items of an urgent nature. In my official call to you, I listed 20 proposals which necessitate prompt action. I shall now discuss a number of these as well as other matters with you briefly.

Industrial and Recreational Development

The first subject that I would direct your attention to concerns a bill to create the Maine Recreation Authority. You will recall that this measure was before you for consideration during the regular session. This was done in order that you would have complete information relative to the structure of such an authority.

Prior to the passage of this legislation it was necessary to amend the constitution in order that the credit of the State could be pledged for guaranteed loans for recreational purposes. As you are aware, the proposal was approved by the electorate on November 2, 1965. The measure that will be presented to you will be substantially the same as the one considered last year. It is very important that this legislation receive your favorable action if we are to hasten the development of our immense recreational potential.

You will also be presented with a proposal to expand the powers of the Maine Industrial Building Authority. This legislation will broaden the scope of the MIBA to other fields of activity as outlined in the printed bill. Detailed reference was made to both of these proposals in my biennial message to you on January 7, 1965.

I personally hail these two measures and the Municipal Industrial and Recreational Obligations Act as three of the most significant advances made in the recent history of our State. These will enhance our ability to attract new industry and to better assist our existing industrial and recreational enterprises to expand.

State Employees' Salaries

It is most important that during this special session every reasonable attempt be made to more adequately equate the salaries of our state employees to those of our neighboring states and local industries. I cannot overemphasize the necessity of immediate and affirmative action in regard to this matter.

Since January 1965 it has become increasingly clear that state employees' wages are lagging considerably behind those paid in jurisdictions competing for suitable workers. According to data collected by the study firm employed by the Legislative Research Committee, salaries are alarmingly low when compared with those paid in adjoining states. This is especially noticeable in salaries paid to those in the lowest ranges of our pay plan. Continuation of this untenable situation could result in serious damage to programs authorized by the legislature.

Highly technical and professional program needs are expanding at a rapid rate. Receipts of federal funds to support many of these programs are dependent upon the maintenance of high standards of employee qualifications.

We have thousands of well trained, highly conscientious employees of whom we may be justly proud. We cannot afford to accept lower standards and thus offer inadequate service to the citizens of Maine.

Legislation under bipartisan sponsorship will be presented to you and I urge its swift enactment.

Health and Welfare

A new federal law removes the limitation which previously has prohibited us from making old age assistance payments to or in behalf of, patients in public institutions for treatment of tuberculosis or mental disease. We should now amend our state statutes to conform with this congressional liberalization.

This action, with provision for the required state agency staff, and grant funds, can generate additional federal revenues in excess of \$1,000,000 per year.

The federal Medicare Act and related acts, with a few exceptions will go into effect July 1, 1966. In order to assure Maine's full participation in these projects we need to make several changes in our statutes. To familiarize you with the urgency of this situation let me cite one example.

The Medicare provision of this act alone is expected to provide \$16 million in medical care per year in Maine.

Legislation will be introduced that will establish our eligibility for full participation in the benefits of the federal programs concerned.

The Department of Health and Welfare has completed all requirements preliminary to the initiation of a food stamp program in cooperation with the federal Department of Agriculture. The plan anticipates the limitation of the program to Androscoggin County at this time. Under this plan, eligible people may have a more adequate family diet, by using the food stamps. However, the administrative requirements of the Department of Agriculture are extensive and detailed, and without necessary staff and funds it will not be possible to activate the proposed program.

Your affirmative action will be needed if we in Maine are to benefit from this plan.

Maine Air Facilities

In this era of revolutionary change one cannot deny the necessity for improved aviation facilities. In order that Maine's largest metropolitan area may enter the jet age I deem it imperative that this Legislature appropriate the sum of \$705,000 for the first phase of development of the Portland Municipal Airport.

A priority should also be extended to Bar Harbor Airport and I recommend the sum of \$40,000 be appropriated for this purpose.

The Maine Transportation Commission was requested by me to present a positive proposal toward the solution of the central Maine air problem.

The commission recently made known their findings, and proposed an area facility to serve central Maine. This Legislature, during its regular session, approved funds for the expansion of the Augusta Airport. The federal aviation agency failed to go along with the expansion of the Augusta Airport, however, and once again a stalemate ensued.

I recommend that if it is your desire to finance the expansion of air facilities through a bond issue, funds should also be included for an area airport in central Maine.

The Transportation Commission is embarking upon a site study and at a future date will submit a recommendation for an exact location.

If such funds are approved in a bond issue, we can forge ahead with construction immediately, once a site has been chosen.

Reimbursement of Fire Costs

As a result of the serious Centerville forest fire of August 1965, the State Forestry Department's appropriation to finance fire suppression costs in the incorporated towns has already been expended. A sum of \$200,000 will be needed by the Forestry Department to meet expenditures still outstanding in 1966.

Our forestry personnel did a superb job in fighting this blaze. We should, of course, give immediate and favorable attention to their request.

Federal-State Coordinator

I recommend that you give thorough consideration to the establishment of the position of Federal-State Coordinator. Presently the State of Maine has no central source of coordination in the area of federal aid programs.

As chief executive, I am largely dependent upon information available through various departments. Understandably, the departments confine themselves to those programs they are directly concerned with.

If Maine is to derive the most beneficial results from federal aid programs, it is important that a central source of coordinated information be made available.

Education

The rapid growth of school administrative districts has created a shortage in funds for educational subsidies for 1966-67.

In addition the amounts due the towns, cities and districts for special subject subsidies exceeds the funds available in both years of the biennium.

Previous Legislatures have recognized the State's responsibility for full payment and I recommend that the amounts required to fulfill the State's obligations be appropriated.

Other legislation most worthy of your consideration will be presented relative to the utilization of federal matching funds under the National Defense Education and Vocational Act, including funds for payment of tuition for Maine students attending the American School for the Deaf, adjustment of appropriations for Aroostook and Washington State Colleges, authorization of positions in vocational rehabilitation, additional funds for education of Indian children, and other legislation relating to the improvement of our educational program.

National Educational Compact

A National Educational Compact designed to establish and maintain cooperation among executive, legislative, professional and lay educational leadership among the states was developed at a recent conference at Kansas City, Missouri.

The compact was designed to facilitate the improvement of state and local educational systems so that each may be able to attain adequate and desirable goals in our society, a society that requires continuous qualitative and quantitative advancement. Maine was ably represented at this conference, and our delegates had a responsible role in framing the compact.

I urge the enactment of enabling legislation so that the State of Maine may participate in and benefit from this worthwhile nationwide endeavor.

The Highway Program

The Highway Beautification Act for 1965 makes it mandatory that the State establish the necessary legal and administrative procedures to control outdoor advertising devices and junkyards on the federal interstate and primary systems of highway with certain exceptions. The law further provides that any state that fails to do so by January 1, 1968 will be penalized to the extent of 20% of federal funds for highway construction purposes. In Maine this penalty would amount to approximately \$4,000,000 per year.

I am advised by the State Highway Commission that those sections of the highway law relating to condemnation will have to be expanded to include the authority to condemn land, outdoor advertising devices and junkyards in certain

instances when it is not possible for the department to purchase these on a negotiated basis.

Bills are being presented for these purposes and it is my recommendation that every consideration be given to the passage of these measures in order that our state may avoid the possibility of being penalized by the loss of federal highway construction funds.

Legislation will be proposed to amend the allocations from the General Highway Fund. These amendments are necessary, primarily, for the purpose of financing proposed adjustments in employees' salaries in the Highway Department and those departments supported in part from highway funds.

The State Highway Commission with the cooperation of the Bureau of Public Improvements has been endeavoring for the past six years to obtain needed additional office space in the State Office Building.

An evaluation of the problem indicates that additional space is not available within the present office building complex.

You will be presented with legislation requesting authorization of a \$2,500,000 bond issue for the purpose of constructing an office building for the State Highway Commission. I recommend you give careful consideration to this measure. It is my opinion that the construction of this building, financed by a bond issue, would be a proper solution to the problem.

Highway Safety

I would like to direct your attention at this time to the extremely important subject of the safety of people on our streets and highways. It was evident from the start of the last quarter of 1965 that Maine was heading for a new but unglorious record in highway fatalities.

I have prepared a four-point program of highway safety measures which I feel will make a definite contribution to the reduction of death on our highways. I realize that these measures will not provide a cure-all for our traffic ills, but we must take firm action if we are to reverse the upward trend in highway deaths.

The points are: the implementation of an expanded driver improvement program; the purchase of ten radar speed detecting devices; the addition of twenty state policemen; and an improved license control system.

Statistical data relative to fatalities on our highways are sufficient to justify immediate action in the areas that I will recommend.

The major causes of death on the highway are speed, failure to yield the right-of-way and liquor involvements in that order. This is true both nationally and here in Maine.

Of the State of Maine's approximately 475,000 drivers, 10,000 are scheduled to take the National Safety Council's Driver Improvement Program in 1966. This program has been working well in Maine and is employed in 30 other states. Funds are necessary for the extension of this worthwhile project.

In this day of electronic ingenuity, one can hardly contest the capability of modern radar equipment to definitely establish the speed of a motor vehicle.

I am convinced that we should immediately secure ten of these units which will effectively cover our State. Legislation will be presented to accomplish this.

More manpower is urgently needed to apprehend drivers who travel at excess speeds. I strongly recommend that you provide funds for twenty additional state troopers. By acting now we can have a number of these officers on our highways at the start of the 1966 summer tourist season.

A nationally known leader in the highway safety field has come to Maine to help us develop an improved license control system. Together with the cooperation of the Secretary of State, the Maine State Police and the Maine Highway Safety Committee, a bill has been prepared which will provide a statutory authority for a Point System Advisory Review Board.

The people of Maine are looking directly at us for positive action toward combating the soaring auto death rate. We must not fail them. Your prompt favorable consideration of the program as outlined will clearly indicate you intend to do everything in your power to halt this tragic waste.

Indian Affairs

The newly established Department of Indian Affairs is faced with a deficit in continuing its service program to our Indian residents. This condition results from the creation of the Department of Indian Affairs and the transfer of the responsibilities for the welfare of our Indians from the Department of Health and Welfare to the new agency.

I recommend that you appropriate the sum of \$139,000 to maintain the former level of assistance provided.

1967 World Exhibition in Canada

The Dominion of Canada is one of Maine's prime tourist markets. In 1967 Canada will sponsor a world exhibition at Montreal.

Legislation will be introduced to provide for Maine's participation in this important event and I urge your favorable consideration.

The Arts and the Humanities

An act relating to the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities has been passed by the Congress. One of the purposes of the act is to support the advancement of cultural progress by "local, state, regional and private agencies."

Matching funds are available to Maine under this law and I feel we would be remiss not to take advantage of the program which will advance our scholarly and cultural pursuits.

You will be asked to approve legislation creating a State Commission on the Arts and the Humanities and to appropriate the sum of \$37,500 to implement the program.

Mining

As a result of year-long exploration and underground development work a valuable deposit of copper and zinc has been located under a tidal estuary at Brookside in Hancock County.

It has been determined that the ore body will have to be extracted by open pit quarry methods.

If this valuable mineral resource is to be utilized, legislation must be enacted to authorize the diversion and draining of this estuary.

Officials of the Callahan Mining Company state that the development of this mineral deposit will lead to a payroll of approximately one million dollars annually. In order to capitalize on this opportunity I recommend passage of the measure.

Archives Program

This Legislature enacted a law providing for the creation of the office of State Archivist. The State Archives Advisory Board has informed me that in their opinion it is essential that funds be made available immediately in order that an archivist may be employed to activate the program.

The recommendation of the Archives Board merits your support.

The board has made a study of the housing needs for a combined archives, library and museum building. The desirability of such a capital addition cannot be denied if Maine is to fulfill its obligations to future generations by adequately protecting the documentation of the State's historic past.

Obviously, this proposal must be evaluated in terms of available resources or the possibility of long-term financing.

I stand ready to cooperate with you in responding to this challenging proposal.

Area Transportation Problem

Maine's largest metropolitan area is presently faced with a possible loss of public bus transportation. We would be extremely remiss to let this situation deteriorate to the extent of a collapse of service in greater Portland.

You will be requested to approve legislation authorizing the formation of a transit district for one or more municipalities in order that mass transportation for public purposes may be preserved.

In conjunction with this legislation an act will be presented to abate the remaining four-cent fuel tax on locally encouraged vehicles. You will also be requested to enact legislation to permit municipalities to appropriate funds to aid private or public agencies operating local bus transportation systems.

I cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity for immediate remedial action in this area.

Allagash Wilderness Waterway Area

During the 102nd Legislature you referred to a special committee the assignment of studying and arriving at a recommendation relative to the preservation of the Allagash Wilderness Area.

The deliberations of this committee have been concluded and their recommendations result in a plan for state control of the famous Allagash Waterway.

This proposal will be presented to you in the form of legislation which will require an initial operating budget of \$75,000 and the availability of \$1,500,000 from a bond issue.

It is anticipated that the latter sum will be matched by an equal amount of federal funds.

I recommend that you approve this proposal in order that this famed wilderness region may be preserved for posterity in its natural state.

Mental Health and Corrections

There is an urgent need to upgrade the salaries of professional people and those employed in all critical positions in our hospitals and institutions. Administrators in these hospitals continually face difficulties in the procurement and retention of qualified persons.

I recommend that you include consideration of this salary deficiency when you review other state employee salary scales.

Several other emergency situations have arisen within the Department of Mental Health and Corrections and appropriate legislation will be introduced to alleviate these conditions.

Technical Services Act of 1965

Congress has enacted a State Technical Services Act. The purpose of the law is to provide for a wider diffusion and more effective application of science and technology in business, commerce and industry.

The University of Maine has been designated by me as the single state agency responsible for the implementation of the provisions of the act and I urge you to appropriate the necessary funds in order that Maine may progress with a meaningful program.

Condition of General Fund

Condition of General Fund

I believe it pertinent at this point to review briefly with you the current condition of General Fund finances, particularly with respect to undedicated revenue. I feel certain that you will want to know exactly where we stand before any appropriations are approved.

During the first six months of this current fiscal year, the period ending December 31, 1965, actual undedicated revenues to the General Fund have exceeded our estimates by \$4,331,632. This is a 10.19% increase. However, I must point out that, for the past three years, our experience has been that the percent of excess revenue at June 30 has shown a decline from that of December 31 in each instance.

The balance of General Fund surplus as of June 30, 1965 was \$13,727,350. All of this amount was appropriated in the regular session.

It should be remembered that a considerable upward adjustment was made in the second year of the current biennium in order to finance the program enacted.

Based upon past experience, economic trends, and revenue adjustments already effected at the regular session, I have arrived at the conclusion that the current year (1965-66) undedicated revenue can be reasonably readjusted upward by 8.43% so that the total excess available at June 30, 1966 would be \$7,415,000.

There is included in my printed message an itemized list of my recommendations requiring appropriations.

Conclusion

I have attempted to familiarize you with a number of the important measures to be considered at this session. There are, of course, numerous other worthy matters that in the interest of time I have not commented on. It is my hope, however, that you will give all of these proposals your serious attention.

I have confidence in the integrity of this body and I sincerely believe you all will act according to the best interest and desires of the people you represent. I stand ready, as always, to assist in working out our mutual problems.

We have recently entered a new year, one that could produce the greatest growth and expansion that this state has ever experienced. It would be well for all of us to set our minds to the task before us in order that we might discharge our obligations with wisdom and dispatch.

Now, I will leave you to your work and wish you all good luck.