

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE
ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION
December 1, 1982 to June 24, 1983
Chapters 453-End

AND AT THE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
September 6, 1983 to September 7, 1983
Chapters 583-588

PUBLISHED BY THE DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
IN ACCORDANCE WITH MAINE REVISED STATUTES
ANNOTATED, TITLE 3, SECTION 164, SUBSECTION 6.

J.S. McCarthy Co., Inc.
Augusta, Maine
1983

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

January 6, 1983

by

GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN

to the

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

One Hundred and Eleventh Legislature

INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN
January 6, 1983

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, honorable members of the 111th Maine Legislature, Mr. Chief Justice and distinguished members of the Maine Judiciary, Senator Mitchell, Bishop O'Leary, Rabbi Krinsky, Reverend Josselyn, my colleagues in service to the people of Maine, my friends, family, and fellow citizens:

It is a rare and precious honor for me to come before you tonight to take the oath of office as Governor for the second time.

I stand before you as one more in a line of governors that goes back through 163 years of Maine history:

From William King, the businessman from Bath, who led a scattering of wilderness towns in a remote Massachusetts district into statehood;

To Hannibal Hamlin of Paris and Hampden, who, in four years, would go from the office of governor of Maine to serve as Vice President during the most trying years in our nation's history;

To Joshua Chamberlain of Brewer and Brunswick, who came to this office by way of Bowdoin College and gallantry on the fields at Gettysburg and saw so clearly what state government must do for Maine to become a part of America's industrial revolution;

To Percival Baxter of Portland, Maine's greatest visionary, who led the struggle to wrest control of our state's destiny from the hands of a few powerful interests;

To Edmund Muskie of Rumford and Waterville, who led this government onto the path of compassion for the least among us, and went on to become a leader of the nation and of the world; indeed, the most distinguished citizen in the history of Maine.

Each of these governors has understood that there is more to the job than simply preparing budgets and wrestling with the daily chores of office. Each knew that his most important responsibility was to understand the times, to bend government to the service of the people, and do what he could to shape the future, according to a vision of what Maine is and what Maine might become.

Four years ago, in my first inaugural, I said that: "Our government does more than tend to a cash register. Our government does more than mind an administrative store. It sets the tone for civic dialogue. It affects the level of confidence in the institutions of a democratic society. It influences the standards of expectations which our people hold for themselves and for their communities."

That was four years ago. Today, I still believe those words. And I further believe that the vote accorded my Administration on November 2nd, the largest vote for a Governor in the history of Maine, shows that Maine people share those values as well.

In 1870, in his address to the Legislature, Governor Joshua Chamberlain

said this: "A government has something more to do than to govern and levy taxes to pay the governors. It is something more than a police to arrest evil and punish wrong. It must also encourage good, point out improvements, open roads of prosperity, and infuse life into all right enterprises. It should combine the insight and the foresight of the best minds of the state for all the high ends for which society is established and to which man aspires.

"That," Chamberlain concluded, "gives us much to do."

Chamberlain's concerns were the same as ours.

He too worried about better transportation, better education, and economy in government; about our under-developed resources and our over-crowded prisons; about homeless children, mental illness, and the social problems of alcohol. And he too worried that too many young people had to leave Maine to find a good job.

We here tonight are linked to Maine history by these common, abiding problems and by something else, as well. That is Chamberlain's view that government is more than laws and taxes.

Like Chamberlain, I believe government is about many things.

It's finding a job for an unemployed person in Searsport, and, as President Kennedy said, assuring that our retarded, who are victims of fate, are not also victims of our neglect.

It is saving lives on the highway.

It's a homemaker helping an elderly woman to continue to live in her own home with dignity.

It's cleaning up our rivers, our land, and our air.

It's leaving things better than you found them.

It's restoring the image of the Maine potato.

It's getting the finest men and women to serve as judges.

It's helping the poorest people in the state.

It's fiscal responsibility. That is, spending someone else's money like it's your own.

It's providing opportunity and hope for those who are down.

It is trust.

It is trying to do your best.

It is honoring your commitments.

It is remembering where you came from.

It is respect for the dignity of all other human beings, no matter what they do in life.

It is all these things and more.

It's loyalty.

It's making tough decisions that tear your heart out.

It's frustrations.

It's failure, but getting up and trying again.

It's lots of things, but, really, one thing:

It's people helping other people.

Only we call it "government."

Only we call it "politics."

If we do it well, we do it with fairness, with compassion, with hope.

But these are lean times.

And we must be realistic.

You cannot keep a small business alive with fairness.

You cannot fund a budget with hope.

You cannot fill a pay envelope with compassion.

And so, where do we go from here?

Our vision remains steady, and our convictions firm, that this Administration should help address challenges posed to a people in transition, from a society that could squander its abundant resources, to one that must import raw materials and energy; from a society in which extended families nurtured each other, to one of isolated individuals and small families, which now often must depend on government to fill these same needs; from a society whose backbone was heavy industry employing millions of blue collar workers, to a post-industrial era where computers and lasers are replacing the mill shops, and robots, the workers; from a society as youthful as the frontier, to one which every year contains a higher percentage of elderly people, with all that implies for Social Security, hospital costs, and public programs.

I do not cite these fundamental changes to suggest that things are any better, or any worse, than before. I cite them to show that this Administration appreciates that our society, in America and in Maine, is dynamic, fluid, changing.

And the mission and objects of government must change with them — if it is to truly serve the people.

For the next four years of state policy with which we have been entrusted, we will propose initiatives that will bring to bear the resources of this government and this people on the dislocations caused by these fundamental changes, as well as new responses to old problems that persist in holding Maine back from attaining the full measure of prosperity and happiness for which we all strive.

To speak of these needs, new and old alike, we propose: more investment in economic development; restructuring our programs of financial assistance to business; and new directions for job training to ensure the skills developed match the jobs available.

We propose to promote full equality of rights and of opportunity for all Maine citizens with a state Equal Rights Amendment.

We propose to do what we must to maintain our unwavering commitmen'

to our neediest people, whatever Washington may do.

We propose renewed attention to the condition of our highways and public facilities, with reforms in the way we finance them. We propose a bold new approach to rein in the runaway costs of medical care. We propose to build on our nationally recognized rivers plan, so we may pass along to future generations the legacy of our state's natural beauty. We propose further development of our energy resources, and additional aid to our cities and towns.

Taken together, we believe that these initiatives will constitute a specific, practical, workable response to the challenges that confront our state, and one which is consistent with the visions and the values of Maine people.

We take on these challenges with a quiet confidence that we can truly make a difference for the better in the quality of the lives of Maine people, a confidence borne of the tempering, the honing of this Administration, through the four years just concluded.

For when this Administration goes to work tomorrow morning, we will have the experience we gained when we created perhaps the most successful drunk driving law in the country.

We will have the know-how that comes from building a fish pier at Eastport.

We will have the teamwork that came from planning a cargo port and a shipyard.

We will have the perspective that we learned when we found a way to help young couples buy their first homes.

And we will have the insight we acquired by bringing Pineland and the Augusta and Bangor hospitals up to and beyond acceptable standards.

So there is much that together we can accomplish for the good of the people of Maine.

But it is my duty to report that any real progress must depend on a prompt and fair resolution of our self-imposed financial crisis. I am referring, of course, to retroactive tax indexing, an issue whose implications are so pervasive that no intelligent discussion of Maine's prospects can ignore it.

At a time of increasing responsibility, can we reduce revenues by over \$100 million?

Yes, we can. We can turn our backs on the old, the poor, the retarded, on our children, on public safety, on much of what makes us humane, sensitive, compassionate people.

But Maine and Maine people are better than that. We believe in honoring the commitments we have made, and helping our neighbors in their hour of need.

So I urge you members of the Legislature not to turn your backs, but to choose instead to help those people who depend on us for a little better life.

The first, best step to achieve that would be to repeal the retroactivity of indexing.

Even without indexing, these are lean times for us all, and difficult choices lie ahead.

There will be those who insist that now is the time for government to do much less — not more — for the people, to shrug off Washington's massive cutbacks; to ignore the special needs of our growing elderly population; to get out of the economic development business; and to leave the isolated, the ill, the disabled and the poor to their own devices.

This is a selfish, shortsighted philosophy.

But I do not despair.

After all, other states must stand by helplessly as carefully built programs and services are knocked flat by the wrecker's ball of economic depression.

For us, matters are somewhat different. We have endured the recession better than most states, and we have intact the economic resources necessary to do the job. We have the power and the wherewithal to rescue ourselves, if we but have the will, the courage, the vision to do so.

I for one am confident that common sense and good judgment will prevail, and that the Legislature will hear and respond to the needs of the people as they have often done so ably in the past.

I have devoted much of these remarks to discussing the values we bring to government and the formidable challenges that we as a people face here in our state. It is fitting and appropriate in an inaugural address to do these things.

But I cannot conclude without departing from this tradition on this occasion to speak to an issue outside our immediate domain but which we can ignore only at our profound peril.

That is the issue of the arms race.

For nothing more surely jeopardizes the quality of our lives — or even the very continuance of life on our planet — than the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

We here in Maine are especially aware of the contribution of a strong and ready armed forces to preserving a fragile truce between the superpowers. And we are proud of the men and women at the shipyards in Kittery and Bath, the airmen on constant alert in Brunswick and Limestone, and the dedicated servicemen and women in isolated posts like Cutler and Winter Harbor.

But we cannot be content with a status quo that means thousands of additional nuclear warheads added to the global arsenal each year.

Nor do we find comfort in the seconds shaved off response time, or a few yards of reduced margins of target error.

Nor can we passively accept the multiplying opportunities for an accident or mistake that could end the world as we know it.

Each of us, from each of our positions in our society, has a moral duty to speak up, and to act as best we can to reverse these ominous trends.

For my part, during the next four years I will continue to work for a mutual, verifiable nuclear freeze.

And I will continue to speak out in favor of measures to contain and control this desperately dangerous arms race in which we are now locked.

I hope that each of you will join me in this effort, for we all have everything to gain — or to lose.

As I begin this new term as Governor, with confidence and deep humility I promise the best that I have to offer, and I ask for your help, for your support, and for your prayers.

For I begin this new term with abiding faith in the best that Maine, and Maine people, have to offer:

The abundance of our natural resources.

The skill and dedication of our work force.

The compassion of our people.

And the spirit of community that has sustained us throughout our history.

For too many of our people, these are surely not the best of times.

But they are far from being the worst of times, as well.

The extremes of Maine's climate and natural beauty teach us that in every sign of despair there is reason for hope; in every defeat there is the prospect of victory; in the deepest day of Maine winter, there is the certain expectancy of spring and renewal.

I ask all of you — those assembled here tonight and those who are watching and listening — to join with me in renewing our shared commitment to the best that Maine and Maine people have to offer.

Tonight, I ask that we renew our resolve to work together with kindness and compassion to honor those who — like Hannibal Hamlin, Joshua Chamberlain, Percival Baxter, and Ed Muskie — have gone before us and set the standards by which we govern.

We promise to keep faith with the men and women of Maine who offer us the chance to lead, and we promise to keep alive the ideal of a caring, decent and humane government.

Thank you very much.