

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE
ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE

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1983

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

by

GOVERNOR JOSEPH E. BRENNAN

February 22, 1983

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, Mr. Chief Justice, members of the Judiciary, and citizens of Maine:

I am grateful for the opportunity to come before you tonight...to report on the state of our State.

To understand where Maine is at this time...we must first speak to...where we are as a nation.

Unemployment in the industrial heartland of America runs...in some cases...to twenty percent.

Foreign competition continues to take markets away from American industries...and jobs from American workers.

Roads...bridges...and water systems across the nation are crumbling.

Washington staggers under record deficits.

And so...the people of Maine have good reason to wonder if the state of their State...tied to the fortunes of this nation...can be any better.

It is true that...across the land...more than one of every ten workers is out of a job.

But we in Maine...have done better than that.

In November...Maine was the only state...with an unemployment rate that was lower than it had been...a year earlier.

And for 1982...Maine's unemployment was lower than the nation's...for the second year in a row.

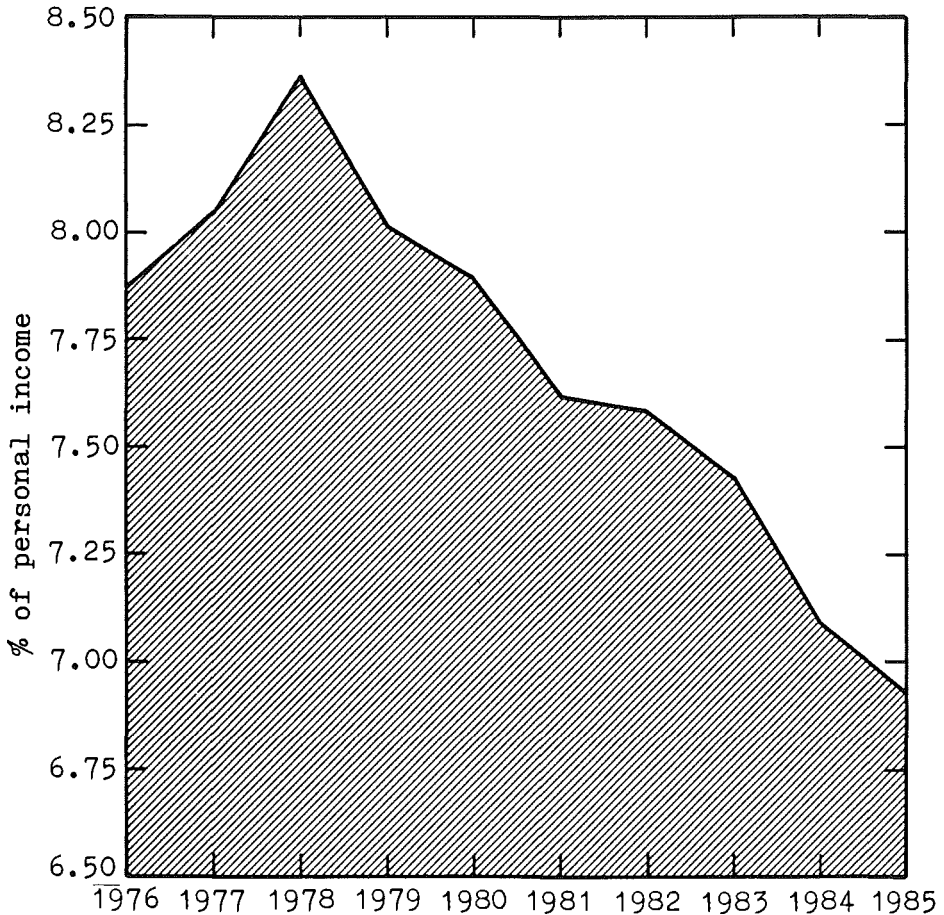
You have to go all the way back to 1956...to find the last time we were under the national average.

Last year...one of the leading bond-rating firms in New York...dropped its rating for several states...but told investors...that Maine's credit...and only Maine's credit...among all the 50 states...was better.

And while other states...like the promised land of California...cannot pay their bills...Maine is one of only a handful of states...that did not raise any broad-based taxes in the past four years.

In fact...for all the clamor that you hear about high taxes...the truth is that Maine citizens now turn over a smaller percentage of their income for state and local taxes...than they did four years ago.

Maine State Taxes as a % of Personal Income 1976 - 1985



We can...and do...take great pride in these accomplishments.

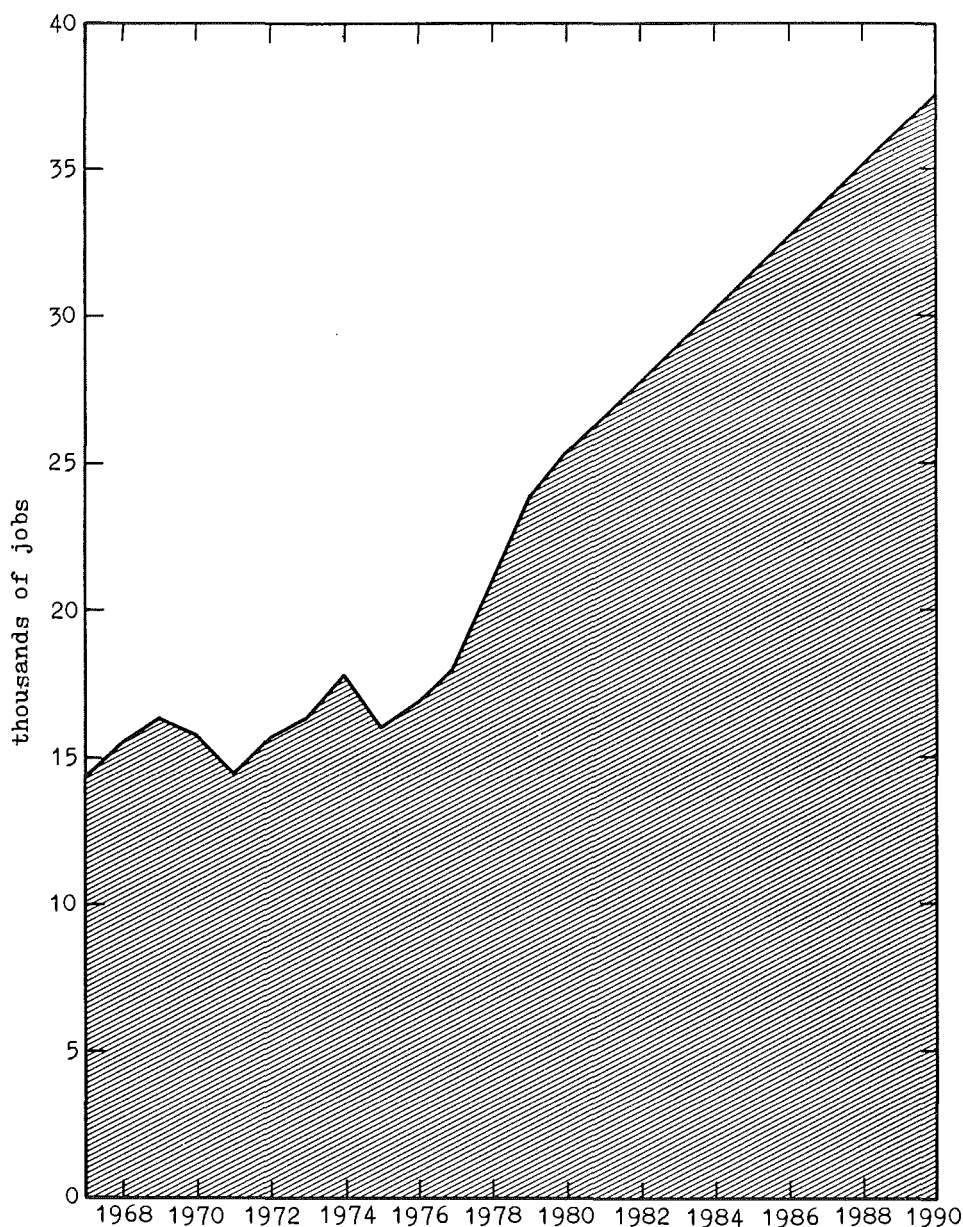
And when we look behind them...we find solid reasons for this success.

At the national level...many are speaking of the need for a drastic restructuring of the economy.

But we in Maine have already had our drastic restructuring.

In the years after World War II...Maine lost tens of thousands of jobs in the textiles business...and in industries tied to it.

Maine Employment in Metals and Electronics 1967-1990



But in recent years...we have gained thousands of new jobs...as new companies...firms with high-tech names and high-tech products...have come to Maine...raising wages...and skill levels...and building economic momentum.

The paper industry alone invested one and one half billion dollars in its Maine plants since 1970...a resounding vote of confidence in Maine's future.

And in this generation...our unique natural beauty...neglected for so long...has been protected by sound environmental laws.

We have created the basis for a growing tourism industry.

We have enriched our special way of life.

We have reversed a century-old pattern of outmigration.

We have reduced our energy costs...relative to the nation...by conservation and reliance on our own energy resources.

As interest rates come down...the housing industry will recover...and as it does...old jobs in construction...and in the woods...will be available again to Maine workers.

Our farmers and fishermen...the victims of competition from subsidized imports...can hope to regain their sales...and expand their markets...with the help of marketing programs begun by my administration.

Our remaining shoe and textile firms are strong...and promise to be a stable source of jobs over the coming decade.

State government has been more aggressive in economic development...in assistance to business...and in the promotion of our State.

For these government initiatives...we have had the enthusiastic support of the private sector...the cooperation of the Legislature...the consent of the voters...and...finally...the blessing of the highest court in our State.

So...across Maine...a shipyard is being built...a cargo port is coming off the drawing boards...new fish piers are under construction...and potato packing sheds are being put to work.

Maine's gross state product...the total value of goods and services produced in Maine...has experienced steady growth.

In 1978...the gross state product was about 7.5 billion dollars.

By 1982...it had grown by almost 50 percent...to 11 billion dollars.

In the last three years for which figures are available...per capita income in Maine leapfrogged from 46th in the nation...to 41st.

Today the Maine economy is strong...stronger than at any time in the past century.

Maine is moving again...poised for new growth...as the national economy gathers strength.

Indeed...I believe that Maine stands at the very threshold of an exciting...new day.

And we can choose to make it happen.

For seldom before...have all the elements for success come together at one time.

An abundance of carefully managed resources.

People who still bother to work hard.

A worldwide market for our products.

Indeed...a certain momentum that is gathering behind the label "Made in Maine".

The program I propose tonight seizes the opportunities...and accelerates that momentum.

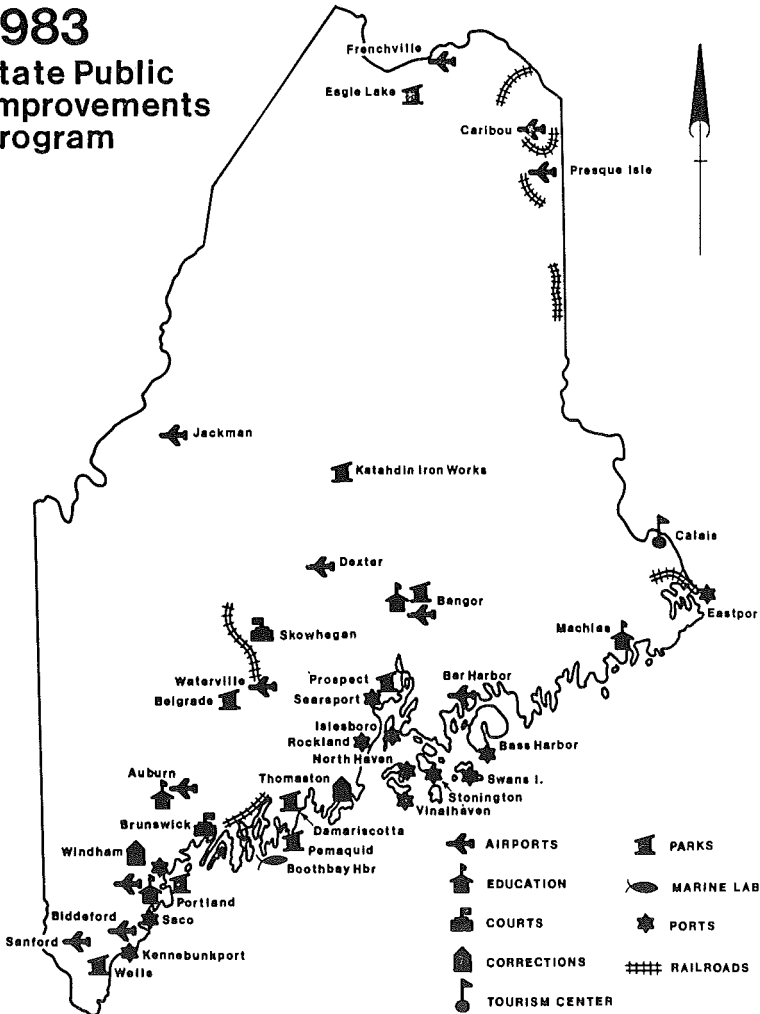
It is a program that addresses areas that are crucial to the growth of the Maine economy...to the future of our children...to the special quality of life we enjoy in Maine...and to the well-being of all our people.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tonight I am proposing a program that will create thousands of new jobs...and encourage new growth...in every part of Maine.

First...I am recommending a 300 million dollar state and federal investment in the future of our State.

1983 State Public Improvements Program



The program will build and repair...

1700 miles of roads...;

56 bridges...;

Provide airport improvements from Frenchville to Sanford...;

A new pier for Eastport...;

A new courthouse for Bath and Brunswick...;

And several other projects which I shall mention later.

In all...5,000 new jobs...in work we shall begin during the next two years.

I am further recommending that we continue our successful housing program under the able leadership of Sharon Lunner...with an additional appropriation...to help hundreds more Maine families...buy their first homes.

We shall also improve our presently inadequate support for one of our most important industries...tourism.

I recommend that we spend an additional 3 million dollars in this budget...to do a more effective job of selling Maine to the nation...and to the world.

And I propose that we redouble our efforts to help our fishermen...farmers...and woods industries...to develop new markets.

EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

We in Maine have always understood the strong connection between a good job and a good education.

That's why we have always made so strong a commitment to the cost of local education.

That's why we have increased state funding for our university system under the leadership of Chancellor Patrick McCarthy.

And that's why we have supported the growth of our vocational technical institutes.

But in a changing world...nothing is more certain...than that the future will belong to those who have the skills...that are needed in the marketplace.

Tonight...therefore...I am recommending an 8 percent increase in what the State provides for local education.

Tonight...I am very proud to recommend an appropriation of two million dollars...to establish a campus of the University of Maine at Lewiston.

This campus will become the centerpiece of the outstanding redevelopment program in Lewiston...under the leadership of Mayor Paul Dionne.

Tonight...I am recommending the creation of a Fund for Excellence...an awards program for teachers...to improve the quality of teaching in all our schools.

And I am proposing a program to encourage talented young people...to become teachers...in subjects where more teachers are needed...especially the sciences and mathematics.

My budget contains funds for improvements at our vocational technical institutes...in Androscoggin...Cumberland...Penobscot...and Washington Counties...for improvements to the State's Marine Research Lab at Boothbay...to increase our practical understanding of our ocean resources.

Finally...I propose to create...a small business training fund...to help Maine men and women master basic skills...in financial planning...management...and marketing.

...And a job development fund...to help train Maine workers for new job opportunities.

These initiatives...renew our commitment to providing the best preparation for life we can...for our children...and for all our people.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

No discussion of the quality of life in this State can fail to address our natural resources.

This administration...like every administration...is morally bound to do what we can to leave our land...our air...and our water...better than we found them.

Our major initiative for this year...builds upon the Maine rivers policy I announced in July.

As our rivers have been cleaned up...the competing demands for their use have multiplied.

We need to have an orderly process for deciding among these demands...for energy...for fisheries...and for recreation.

Our legislation will set aside 1100 miles of Maine's most distinguished...and nationally famous...rivers...for special protection in their present state.

We shall also streamline our State laws governing hydroelectric development...to encourage this renewable source of energy at appropriate sites...and to reduce further our dependence on foreign oil.

In a related initiative...we shall provide State Bond Money to take up the slack of reduced federal support for cleaning up our rivers.

We shall propose other initiatives...as well.

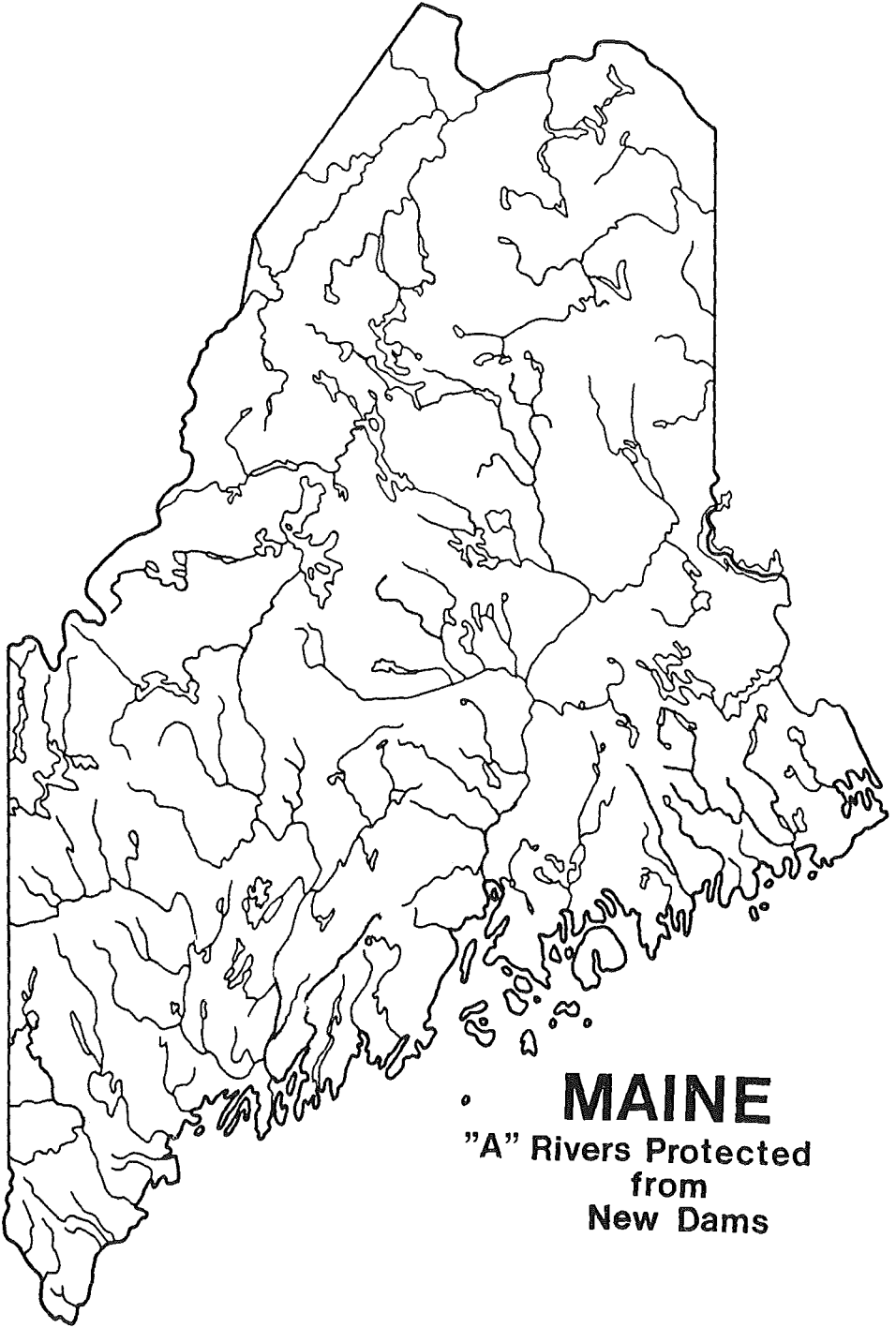
The very future of Maine agriculture is tied to soil and water conservation.

But...too frequently...we use practices that erode our topsoil at twice the tolerable rate.

I therefore recommend legislation to help our soil conservation districts preserve this resource.

And to give more Maine people access to the beauty...the peace...and the breathing space of our state parks...

I will propose funds to make them available close to home in the Bangor area...the Waterville-Augusta area...and in Aroostook...Lincoln...and York Counties.



HUMAN NEEDS

But...concerned as we are with the quality of our environment...government has the special responsibility to be even more concerned with the quality of life itself for our least fortunate citizens.

It is in the area of human needs that this administration has faced its most severe test.

Despite massive federal cutbacks...here in Maine...where this Legislature and this Administration still believe in social justice...we will continue to help our elderly...our children...and...yes...our poor.

We shall continue our policy of supporting the dignity of all people...especially those who depend on government for a better life.

So our budget recommendations will include:

—increased support for our State's poorest children...and for programs such as day care...homemakers services...and hot meals;

—additional money to help prevent child abuse...and for programs that help the elderly stay in their own homes;

—and added resources to help our mentally retarded to live outside institutions...to their fullest potential...

But tonight...I must say to you that our ability to provide these services is comprised daily...by the runaway cost of health care.

Let me share a few figures with you...to illustrate the dimensions of this problem.

In just over ten years...the cost of health care has doubled...from 5 to 10 percent...of our entire gross national product.

In the past four years...total expenditures on health care in Maine...have gone from 771 million dollars...to 1.2 billion dollars a year...an increase of 56 percent.

And more than half of that comes right out of the taxpayers' pocket.

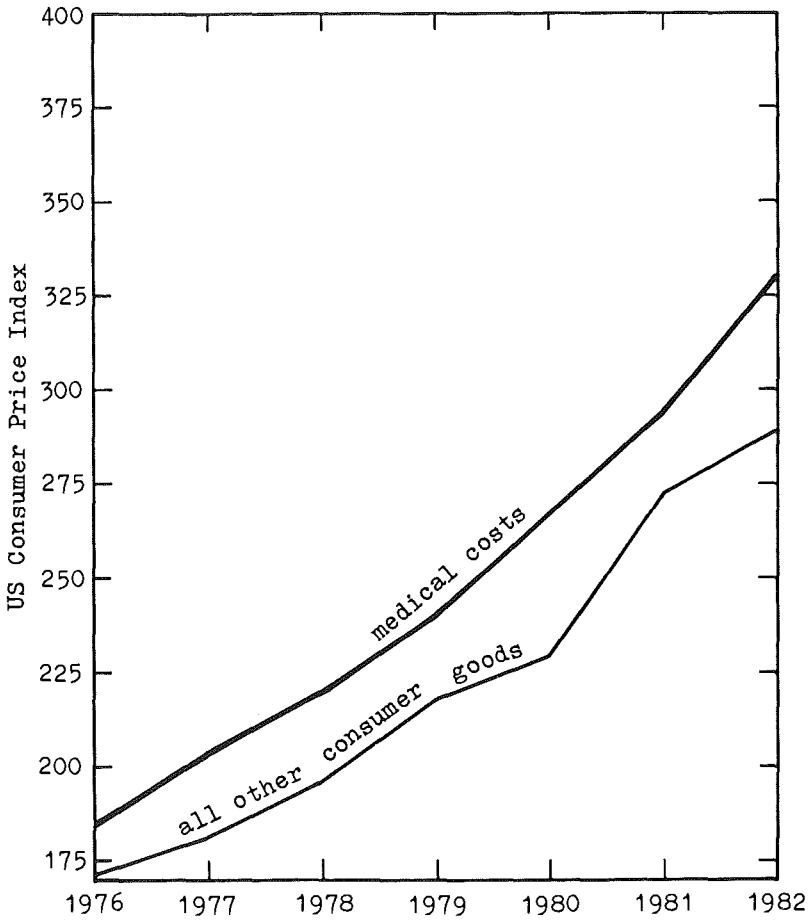
The voluntary steps taken by Maine hospitals to stem the tide have failed.

This year...we estimate that the growth in hospital costs...just the growth in costs...will be at least another 70 million dollars in Maine.

The Maine taxpayer can no longer afford these constant...soaring increases.

Enough is enough.

Medical Cost Increases 1976 - 1982 (U.S.)



So one of our most important bills this session...will compel hospitals to hold down costs.

This bill provides reasonable limits within which hospitals...like the rest of us...will have to live.

At a time when all vital services...our schools...our police...our fire departments...must live within a tight budget...and still get the job done...so too...must our hospitals.

There is no single greater service this Legislature can do for the Maine taxpayer...for those who are genuinely in need...and for our business climate...as well...than to enact this measure.

Controlling our hospital costs will reduce the cost of Workers' Compensation...hold down the cost of doing business in Maine...and lessen the burden on the business community of this State.

But most of all...it will enable us to continue to meet the most pressing needs of those who have least among us.

COURTS AND CORRECTIONS

Another concern we must address this year is that of Courts and Corrections. Overcrowding is a very real problem in our prisons and court facilities.

We have taken constructive steps to address this problem...by opening new minimum security facilities...at Charleston and Hallowell.

And we can take heart...with changing demographics...and last year's drop in reported felonies...that we may be near the peak of demand for prison space.

For these reasons...I believe we can safely defer the ambitious construction program suggested by the Department of Corrections.

Our budget contains funding...for the reconstruction of the east wing of the State Prison at Thomaston...and for the construction of a new unit for women prisoners at South Windham.

I do not pretend...however...that bricks and mortar are the whole solution to our prison problems.

I look forward to working with the Legislature to address the persistent problems of idleness...and rehabilitation...that plague our correctional system.

In the end...however...the quality of our system of justice depends on the quality of our judges.

These men and women are crucial to the success of the rule of law in our State.

We have been uncommonly fortunate in attracting some of our best and our brightest to the bench...despite offering the lowest salaries in the nation...and some of the most inadequate courthouses in which to work.

I do not believe that we should continue to depend on the generous sacrifice of these dedicated men and women...

I propose as a part of my budget...a meaningful pay increase for our judges...and funds to begin the long overdue renovation of the very worst of our courthouses.

Tonight...I cannot leave the issue of public safety...without noting that...despite the success of our tough drunk driving laws...recent tragedies involving teenagers on our highways remind us...that our job is not yet finished.

Tonight...I propose that anyone 19 years old or under who is stopped for driving after drinking alcohol...have their license suspended for one year.

And I ask for your emergency action to implement this proposal at the earliest time.

THE BUDGET

This is an ambitious program I have laid out so far...and one might ask just how we shall pay for it.

I am pleased to report to you tonight that I am recommending no increase in the rates of either the sales or income taxes for the coming two years.

We have had to make hard choices...to leave the income and sales tax rates as they are...and still meet the basic needs of our government.

In the process...we have determined that Maine can no longer afford to exempt cigarettes from the sales tax.

At the same time...I am recommending adjustments in several Highway User Fees...based on the findings of the Bipartisan Highway Cost Allocation Study Committee.

I propose to increase the State Fuel Tax by 5 cents.

This money is needed to keep our commitment to the cities and towns...and to recapture lost Federal Highway Funds.

This first increase in the Gas Tax since 1971 will make our rate equal to New Hampshire's.

With these important and...I believe...justifiable exceptions...we have been able to avoid any other tax increase at all.

I am also recommending that we undedicate the Highway Fund.

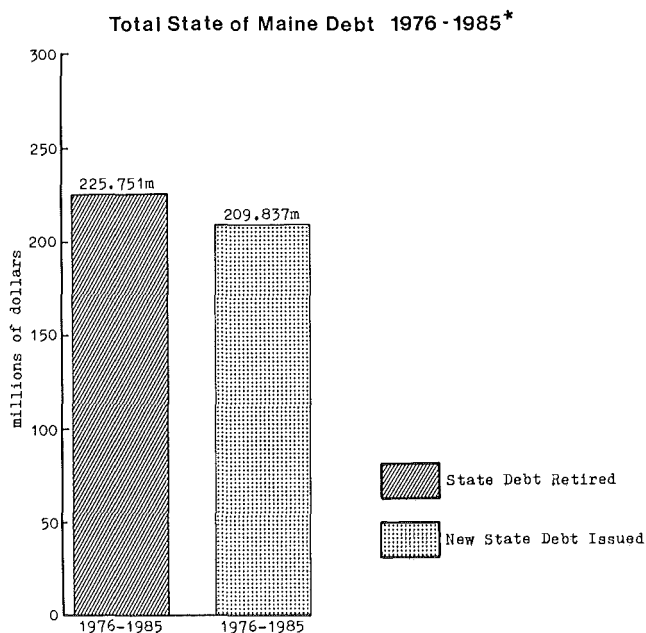
And as we have done in the past...the budget I am submitting...reduces some ongoing programs that...in our judgment...have outlived their usefulness...or do not merit the same high priority they once enjoyed.

Let me mention a few:

—We can save over three million dollars by getting the State out of the retail liquor business.

—And another three million dollars...by apportioning to forest landowners the true cost of fire control in the State.

—To eliminate duplication of services...we can abolish the State's Bureau of Liquor Enforcement...since most of what it does is really a local police function.



* non-highway debt, including Brennan Administration Proposals

In all...we have identified more than 14 million dollars in savings in current services.

And where our cuts may cost state employees their jobs...this administration will work with them...to help them find new jobs.

STATE-LOCAL RELATIONS

Further...this administration will not seek to balance its own budget on the backs of Maine's cities and towns...as the federal government has tried to do with the states.

On the contrary...we seek a new era of partnership with our cities and towns.

Last spring I convened the first Blaine House Conference on State and Local Relations.

The report of that conference is the basis for my recommendations to you tonight.

Through our commitment to the cost of local education...the highest in the northeast...Maine already makes a major contribution to our cities and towns.

Tonight...I urge that we do more to reduce pressure on the Local Property Tax.

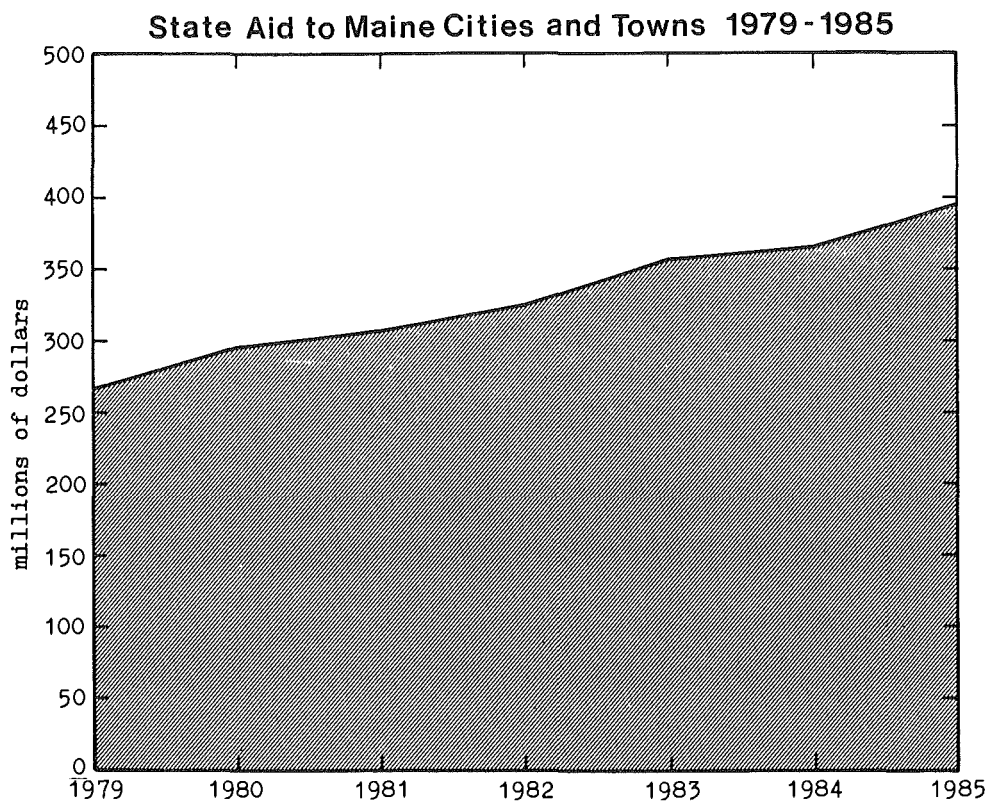
First...I propose to increase the State-Local Revenue Sharing Formula from 4 to 5 percent of sales and income tax revenues.

This will add more than 6 million dollars a year to the revenues of our cities and towns.

Second...in the past I have supported legislation...to allow cities and towns to collect fees from certain tax-exempt organizations...for the government services they receive.

As one of those organizations...state government should set an example.

And so I recommend that the state begin making service payments...in lieu of taxes...to cities and towns that have state-owned buildings.



Tonight...I am also recommending a program of government reform at the county level...to return control of county budgets to the cities and towns who pay for them.

Together with our Economic Development Program...which will generate new jobs...new buildings...retail sales...and other economic activity...my initiatives will lessen the burden of property taxes on our citizens...bring greater accountability to our counties and...I believe...help assure the financial health of our cities and towns.

OTHER INITIATIVES

Before I conclude...I would like to mention a few other highlights of our program...time does not allow me to mention all of them.

I am asking the Legislature to bring to an end...for those who enter state service in the future...the costly practice that permits state troopers...game wardens...and others...to retire after only 20 years on the job...

We can no longer afford a system which permits full retirement benefits at the grand old age of 41...

Next...we can avoid hundreds of serious injuries to small children...by requiring the use of child safety seats in cars...

Because of the threat of pollution to our groundwater supplies...a threat that is all too real in some communities today...I recommend greater state efforts to assure the purity of Maine's groundwater supplies...

We will support the recommendations of Speaker John Martin's Commission on Workers Compensation Reform...

Our number one priority in this area will be...as it has been...to assure safety in the Maine workplace.

I recommend an additional appropriation for our weatherization program...so we may continue to help low income people reduce the costs of heating their homes...

I will propose the donation of a state-owned building in Bangor...to help ease the difficult problems of gravely ill children...and their parents...

I will recommend funding for legal services for the poor...so that they may not be denied access to the courthouse doors on civil matters...

And...for the first time ever...this state government will establish a long-range capital planning process...to help us plan effectively for the maintenance and replacement of all our state facilities...just as major corporations do.

CONCLUSION

In the coming days and weeks...I shall present all these initiatives to you...for your consideration.

I pledge to you that each member of my administration will work with you...in the spirit of cooperation and compromise...to make this program a reality for the people of Maine.

Before I conclude...I wish to thank President of the Senate Gerard Conley...and Speaker of the House John Martin...for this opportunity to come before you tonight...to express my thoughts and hopes for our State.

And I especially thank the Maine television stations and Public Radio Network...for the time to share my views with all of Maine's citizens.

These are sober times for our nation.

We are just coming through one of the worst recessions of this century.

It has tested American businesses...large and small...to the breaking point...and tragically...sometimes beyond.

It has taken from more than ten million men and women the pride and dignity that comes from doing an honest day's work.

Through all this...how fortunate are we who can call Maine home!

We...who know from daily life...that in adversity...there is strength to be found!

We...who understand those values...of patience...tolerance...hard

work...concern...and commitment...for which the nation has gained new respect and new regard.

I have said many times...in many places...that Maine is a special place.

Special for its abundant resources.

Special for its magnificent beauty.

Special for its history and diversity.

And most of all...special for its people.

At last...the rest of our nation...which for so many years seemed so far ahead of us...in so many ways...has caught up with Maine.

At last our nation...which for so long measured success in material goods...has begun to know what we in Maine have known all along: that the true measure of people...and their community...lies in the values they hold...the values they share...the values they hand down from one generation to the next.

The prospect before this generation of Maine men and women...is one of expanding economic opportunities that will support our needs...and sustain our special way of life...if we have the vision...the foresight...and the courage...to bring them to reality.

Tonight...we stand at the threshold of a new time for Maine...a new time that will build upon the best that Maine and Maine people have to offer.

Maine is moving again.

As your Governor...I believe it is my duty to draw upon the best that every Maine person has to offer...to create greater opportunities for all Maine people.

As your Governor...I have travelled this nation...and I know that the best there is in every Maine person...is the best any person...anywhere...has to offer.

Tonight...I pledge to you that this...my second and last term as your Governor...will be devoted to creating the basis for a new time in Maine;

A new time that preserves and protects the best of our past;

A new time that accepts the hardships and challenges of the present;

A new time that welcomes the risks and the rewards of our future.

In this effort...I ask for your prayers...for your encouragement..and for your support.

Together...we cannot and we shall not fail.

Thank you very much.