

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record

OF THE

Eightieth Legislature

OF THE

State of Maine

1921

AUGUSTA
KENNEBEC JOURNAL PRINT
1921

HOUSE

Friday, Jan. 28, 1921.

The House met according to adjournment and was called to order by the Speaker.

Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Walch of Augusta.

Journal of previous session read and approved.

Papers from the Senate disposed of in concurrence.

The following bills, resolves and petitions were received and, upon recommendation of the committee on reference of bills, were referred to the following committees:

Agriculture

By Mr. Winter of Auburn: Petition of Joseph Albert of Turner and 120 others in favor of the passage of the bill relating to the sale of milk.

Appropriations and Financial Affairs

By Mr. Phillips of Bar Harbor: Resolve granting aid to the Bar Harbor Medical and Surgical Hospital.

By Mr. Smith of Ludlow: Resolve in favor of Madigan Memorial Hospital.

By Mr. Burns of Eagle Lake: Resolve in favor of the Northern Maine General Hospital, Eagle Lake, Maine.

By Mr. Moody of York: Resolve appropriating money for the York Hospital.

Claims

By Mr. Carney of Newcastle: Resolve to reimburse the town of Southport for expenses of the sickness and burial of Lydia A. Rowe.

Education

By Mr. Varney of Jonesboro: Bill, an act to amend sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph two of Section 7 of Chapter 188 of the Public Laws of 1917, relating to the duties of superintendents of schools.

By the same gentleman: Bill, an act to amend Section 14 of Chapter 16 of the Revised Statutes, as amended by Chapter 62 of the Public Laws of 1917, relating to the provisions for heating, lighting, ventilating and hygienic conditions in new or reconstructed school buildings.

By the same gentleman: Bill, an act for the improvement of sanitary conditions in school building toilets.

By Mr. Cram of Portland: Resolve in favor of Westbrook Seminary, Portland, Maine.

By Mr. Easman of Fryeburg: Resolve in favor of Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg.

By Mr. Wadsworth of Winthrop: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Oak Grove Seminary in Vassalboro. (Bill No. 1)

By the same gentleman: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Oak Grove Seminary in Vassalboro. (Bill No. 2)

By the same gentleman: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Litchfield Academy. (Bill No. 1)

By the same gentleman: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Litchfield Academy. (Bill No. 2)

By the same gentleman: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Monmouth Academy. (Bill No. 1)

By the same gentleman: Resolve to appropriate money for the maintenance of Monmouth Academy. (Bill No. 2)

By Mr. Carney of Newcastle: Resolve in favor of Lincoln Academy in Newcastle.

By Mr. Hussey of Blaine: Resolve in aid of Ricker Classical Institute.

Inland Fisheries and Game

By Mr. Wight of Newry: Resolve in favor of Northern Oxford Fish and Game Association.

Judiciary

By Mr. McIlheron of Lewiston: Bill, an act to repeal the law authorizing a divorce from the bonds of matrimony. (1000 copies ordered printed).

By Mr. Landers of Eustis: Bill, an act to authorize the town of Rangeley to acquire the wharfs in Rangeley Lake of the Rangeley Lakes Steamboat Company.

By Mr. Pennell of Rumford: Bill, an act to amend Chapter 116 of the Private and Special Laws of 1915, relating to the court house in town of Rumford. (500 copies ordered printed).

Legal Affairs

By Mr. Carney of Newcastle: Bill, an act to permit the town of Southport to obtain a supply of pure water.

Mercantile Affairs and Insurance

By Mr. Boothby of Saco: Bill, an act to amend Section 36 of Chapter 53 of the Revised Statutes, relative to mutual fire insurance companies.

Military Affairs

By Mr. Barwise of Bangor: Bill, an act to provide for the acceptance of the benefits of an act by the Senate and House of Representatives of Congress assembled, entitled "An act to provide for the promotion of vocational rehabilitation of persons disabled in industry and otherwise, and their return to civil employment," and to provide for the administration of the same.

Pensions

By Mr. Ricker of Poland: Resolve in favor of Francis Stone, civil war veteran, for pension of twelve dollars per month.

By Mr. Case of Lubec: Resolve increasing the State pension of Vinnie E. Saunders of Trescott.

By Mr. Kimball of Hampden: Resolve in favor of Olive A. Ham of Bangor.

Public Health

By Mr. Phillips of Bar Harbor: Bill an act to prevent the marriage of persons having syphilis. (300 copies ordered printed).

Salaries and Fees

By Mr. Towne of Madison: Bill an act to amend Section 38 of Chapter 214 of the Public Laws of 1919, increasing the salary of the Judge of Probate of Somerset County.

Towns

By Mr. Forbes of Paris: Bill an act to divide the town of Paris and establish the town of West Paris. (300 copies ordered printed.)

Ways and Bridges

By Mr. Murchie of Calais: Bill "An act to amend Chapter 25 of the Revised Statutes as amended, relative to State-aid roads, granting certain powers to municipal officers now held by the State Highway Commission."

By Mr. Burns of Eagle Lake: Resolve in favor of building a road in the town of Eagle Lake to open farm

lands for settlement. (300 copies ordered printed.)

By Mr. Peabody of Richmond: Resolve in favor of the town of Richmond to build a road from Richmond to Richmond Corner.

By Mr. Granville of Parsonsfield: Resolve in favor of the town of Newfield for roads.

By Mr. Leighton of Dennysville: Resolve to repair the Machiasport and East Machias bridge.

By Mr. Audibert of Ft. Kent: Resolve in favor of bridge in the town of Ft. Kent.

By Mr. Patterson of Industry: Resolve in favor of the town of Philips.

Reports of Committees

Mr. Murray from the Committee on Legal Affairs reported "Ought not to pass" on bill "An Act to amend Section 14 of Chapter 122 of the Revised Statutes relative to compensation to prosecutors, officers and victims of larceny."

Mr. Mason from the same Committee reported the same on bill "An Act to save daylight and to provide standard time for the State of Maine."

Reports were read and accepted and sent up for concurrence.

Mr. Fagan from the same Committee reported "Ought to pass" on Bill "An Act amending Sections 4 and 6 of Chapter 262 of the Public Laws of 1917 relating to fees of City Clerks."

Report was read and accepted and the Bill ordered printed under joint rules.

Orders of the Day

The SPEAKER: The Chair would call the attention of the members of the House to an order already passed, which you should communicate, to your friends that private and special bills will not, under the general order, be received in the Eightieth Legislature after February 10.

The SPEAKER: It is sometimes the pleasure of a Legislative assembly to see and observe those who have gone before them in attempting to execute the duties incumbent upon the Legislative body. It is not very often that a Legislative assembly has the opportunity to see one who was very

active a whole generation back, and it is very rare that a Legislative assembly is privileged to listen to a Speaker who officiated more than a generation back, but who still is one of the strong, young men of the State. It is with a good deal of pleasure that the Speaker presents to the House this morning the Honorable William Widgery Thomas, who was the Speaker of this House—I will not say how long ago—but who is still one of the stalwart sons of Maine. Mr. Thomas. (Applause, the members rising).

Hon. William Widgery Thomas

Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House of Representatives of Maine: As I stand before you today and look into your faces, the conviction comes back to me that the best and noblest crop that Maine produces today, as it was a half century ago, is its sons, its men, its men of Maine; and it is very pleasing for me to stand here before you today. Standing here, my ship of life seems to have drifted backward, and I am sailing again upon the present sunny seas of early manhood; but, gentlemen, good men as we have in Maine—and there are no better in the world, I have never found them and I have traveled far—we want more. Maine is a State of imperial resources. Where grows greener grass? Where goes laughing and singing to the sea brighter and more crystal streams? Where are there better quarries? Where are there vaster woodlands? Develop those resources of Maine, and you have an empire State; but to develop them, we need men. I was impressed deeply by this in early manhood. When but a mere lad, I was sent over the ocean to represent the United States in the Kingdom of Sweden. I was sent by that great and good president, whose friendship I had the everlasting honor to enjoy, Abraham Lincoln. (Applause).

I learned to know the Swedes while there. I learned more than that,—I learned to respect, to admire and to love them. It was my first love, and I have never gotten over it. There, said I, there are the men we want in Maine, and when I came home—it was as long ago as the fall of 1865—I talked the mat-

ter up; I wrote articles for the newspapers and got some of them in; I delivered lectures upon the subject; I was filled with it; I was enthused with it; it must be done. Finally, in 1869, I worked out a plan. I drew that up into a bill, and I came down to the Legislature which convened that year. It was referred to its appropriate committee and went through its first and second reading, but when it came up for the third reading, though everything looked swimmingly, one of the representatives,—I will not call his name—got up and made a short but very decisive speech. He said: "Mr. Speaker, we have got paupers enough in Maine already, and now comes Thomas down to this Legislature and proposes to bring over a whole shipload more of them." My friends, I must say that that speech was decisive and my work for years was voted down unanimously. But, gentlemen, legislatures are very human and one must never give up. I came down the next year, 1870, with the same bill. It was referred to its committee, and it went through the House unapprisingly, and through the Senate too, and was signed by the Governor on the 23rd day of March. Two days after the Governor appointed me commissioner to carry the measure out and the fate of my bill was in my own hands. I could not ask for more than that. I sailed for Sweden; I recruited a colony—a little colony,—of 50 souls in the port of Gottenborg and we sailed away for America on the 25th of June. Now, gentlemen, let me say one thing, These were all good men, and willing too, and their children—young farmers; there was not one from the city. They were tough fellows and good fellows, well suited to wield the woodmen's axe. They were men of some means. Let me say this, and do not forget it! There was not one of that colony that came with me, or came afterwards, who did not pay his own way from Sweden to Maine, where he settled, and they brought money and tons and tons of baggage with them. They were not paupers. That little band sailed away from old Sweden. They left home and country and they faced the perils of a voyage of 4,000 miles and the hardships and toil of hewing themselves a home in the wilderness in a foreign land—they

paid their own way too—without so much as the scratch of a pen by way of contract or obligation, but with simple faith in the honor and the hospitality of the good State of Maine. They were not given anything except 100 acres to each head of families of the wilderness land of which Maine still possessed some. We sailed over the Atlantic, landed at Halifax, crossed the Bay of Fundy, forced our way up the St. John River in large scows drawn by horses along the bank, crossed over the line into Maine, cut our way into the thick, deep woods, eight miles beyond the last American settlement, and there we were on the spot just four months from the day that the bill was passed. When we got to the center of the township we stopped. The Swedes with their wives and their children clustered around me and we devoutly thanked God who had led us on our long journey and brought us safely to what was to be our home in the new world. It was then Township No. 15, Range 3, west of the east line of the State. I baptized it New Sweden, a name I thought commemorative of the past and auspicious of the future. Then it was about noon. We looked around us. All around, as far as the eye could see, in great undulations, ending with the horizon against the sky, was one unbroken wilderness. A colossal forest covered all the land. In those forest depths the blows of the settler's axe had never resounded. Through the branches of those gigantic trees the smoke from settler's cabin had never curled heavenward. There roamed the moose and prowled the bear and the silence of midnight was broken by the hooting of the Arctic owl. I must confess that when I awoke about midnight, lying on some spruce boughs under a shelter of poles and bark with my 50 children of the woods, not one of them speaking a word of our language, lying around me, and heard that confounded old owl hoot. I felt very strongly that I was up against it; but we surmounted every difficulty because we went to work. We worked, worked, worked on the soil of Maine. Trees began crashing down, logs were hewn and rolled up into houses, twisted trunks of trees were made into crude furniture. In going about one would hear the axes

resounding and the trees crashing down and there was the good man of the house felling trees and the Swedish mother, usually singing some song to her children. So the work went on; clearings opened up; crops were put in. Work! work! work! that was the talisman, and that is what carried us ahead. We kept on working, and it has not stopped to this day. The qualities of those Swedes were such that took them ahead, and they have built the community in the wilderness. They were first, industrious; they worked from morning until night. In the second place, they were economical. They had to have some animal to help them, but if a Swede did not have enough money to buy two horses, he only bought one. If he did not have money enough to buy a horse, he bought an ox. If an ox was beyond his means, he bought a steer; and if he could not afford a steer, he made a rope harness, threw it on his only cow and stubbed around with her among the blackened stumps until he could do better. It became a great joke up through Aroostook—the Swedes with those rope harnesses on their cows—but we did not know them. All the while the Swedes were teaching us a lesson—"Live within your means." Those same Swedes, or their children, are riding around today, if the snow is not too deep, in 350 automobiles, and they have paid for them all. (Applause.)

Another reason for our success is that we were a temperance colony. There has never been a rumshop in New Sweden, and never will be, thank God. (Applause). Another reason is that they are a religious colony. As soon as their own little log huts were built, they built churches, and they went to church, too. They filled those churches every Sunday, and do today. God-fearing, temperate, industrious, economical; they must get ahead in the woods of Maine.

Another thing! Every wife was a helpmeet. They cut their logs to be rolled up into houses generally with crosscut saws, with a handle on either end. Go anywhere where there was a man and his wife and the wife had hold of one end of the saw and she did half of the work, too. I was riding out on horseback to the nearest

village, Caribou, one morning, and I met one of our Swedish women trudging along with a great meal sack on her back. It was pretty heavy, but she was trudging along with it into the village. When I passed her, I was going to salute her, but there was a tremendous commotion inside of that sack, so much so that it frightened my horse, and he almost threw me into the ditch. "Hello, my good woman," I said. "What have you got in there?" "Ha! Ha!" she said, "four nice pigs." "Where did you get them?" said I. "Oh, down two miles below Caribou." Caribou was eight miles from New Sweden and two miles below would make 10 miles from her home, so she had walked out 10 miles, she had bought her pigs and taken them on her back and was trudging back on a trip that when completed would make 20 miles that morning. It was then only about 8 o'clock, and although she had those four pigs on her back, I can assure you that she was grinning as broadly as her broad mouth could be extended, thinking what nice pigs they were to be sure. And there is one other woman, and I will tell you her name, for it deserves to go down into the history of Maine—Mrs. Kjersti Carlson. It was autumn and late in November. Her husband had been sick. He grew sicker and could do no work. She had a large family of children whom she fed as long as the money and provisions lasted. They finally gave out. Her husband sick and no medicine; children crying for bread. Now what did that woman do? Did she go and borrow of her neighbors? Not a bit. Did she beg? No. Did she sit down and cry? Never a tear. She took her husband's axe and went into the woodlot and cut down some cedar trees. She sawed those trees into bolts. She took her husband's spokeshave and rived those out into shingles—good white cedar shingles. She packed them nicely into a bunch and took that bunch on her back on a dark November day with the snow sifting down. She took that bunch of shingles five miles through the woods on her back and bartered it at the corner store for bread for her children and medicine for her husband. Now, my friends, that woman does not need to be

Americanized. She is Americanized already from the start (applause) and she is filled, as most every Swede in that colony is filled, with the old, original sound principles of our Puritan fathers, of our Pilgrims who landed 300 years ago on Plymouth Rock—honesty, religion, industry, economy and love for all that is high, and hate for all that is base and low.

Now, my friends, at the first of it many thought in the Legislature of Maine that the Swedes would be paupers, and the general opinion among the Americans settled in northern Aroostook around them was that the thing would never be a success in the world and that within a year everybody would clear out, the Swedes probably go west and the whole thing be a failure. My own American friends around there used to come in there out of curiosity and spend the night now and then and spy around to see how things were going on. Soon after I got the Swedes in there I was going out one morning and I overtook one of the principal men of Caribou, the nearest village. He had been in over night and was going out. Well, I was glad to have company and I commenced to talk to him and tell him what magnificent people these Swedes were, what a great success it was going to be, and that it was going to make the wilderness blossom like the rose, for I was enthusiastic in those days and I stuffed him chock full. He did not take it in very readily. He stood it just as long as he could and at last, when he could stand it no longer, he turned on me and looked me squarely in the face and said: "Mr. Thomas, you may say what you like, but I tell you there aint bottles enough in that colony to hold the tears those poor deluded creatures will shed before their first winter is out." "Well, now, there are a great many bottles in the colony, and I do not believe there has ever been a tear in any one of them, and there has not been a drop of rum in any one of them either, and the colony has succeeded.

Now, my friends, that colony has gone on; it has broadened out its clearings. They are smooth and beautiful fields now of grain and grass, and the great potato fields

where the long lines of potatoes, so beautiful in bloom, run way to the horizon, and they are happy in there. They have succeeded. They have fine farm houses, 2 1-2 stories the most of them; well-built great barns; large potato houses. They soon had the best horses in Aroostook county. They have now got as good automobiles as there are anywhere. They have their schools as well as their churches and I want to tell you one fact about the schools which I found there. We had a celebration last summer, some of you know of it. We celebrated the fiftieth anniversary and we were proud to celebrate it. Now, they have 17 schools, some of them graded. Those schools all taught the English language by Swedish schoolmasters and schoolmarmes, and that is not all. There are today seven Swedish schoolmarmes teaching in the adjoining American towns—teaching English to the Yankee boys. They are Americanizing us, my friends, and the secret of it all is this: Frugality, honesty, hard work, religion—but the principal and chief of all is hard work. Now that is the secret of the future of Maine. We have altogether too much wilderness land that is not populated. We have today too many abandoned farms in Maine, many of them in the older counties of the State. What we need is men who will go into the wilderness and men who will take abandoned farms. We want first of all our own sons to do that. I understand there is today in the older counties over 2000 abandoned farms with buildings on them. That my friends ought not to be in this good State of Maine. Let us have this policy in the State, to get men here, good men, the best of men,

their wives and families and in some way without too much aid, for I do not believe in coddling people, get honest, industrious, working men with their families, without too much expense to the State, to take up and occupy and turn into farms such portion of the timberlands of Maine as are adapted to agriculture, and also to assist our own sons and get immigrants, if we can, to take up these abandoned farms. Then Maine will go ahead. Did you know that in 1860 Maine's advance stopped? Maine not only stopped but went backward in population for the first and only time in her history. In 1870 our good State of Maine numbered 1364 less population than she did ten years before. She stopped in her advance, she paused. Then came a wave of good sons and daughters from across the ocean. That wave checked the retrograde movement. Ebb tide was turned to flood, and thank God it has been flood tide ever since. Let the flood go on and help it in judicious ways if you can. As a result of my lifetime experience, I believe the thing to do is to get men here, but do it prudently. Get them to work. Work is the greatest agency for Americanization. Work is the grand thing of life. Stagnation, my friends, is death, death. Work is life, and I believe the slogan for the future of Maine is Work! work! work, work on the soil of our good state, and work out a grand and imperial future! I thank you for your attention. (Prolonged applause.)

On motion by Mr. Chandler of Dover.

Adjourned until 4.30 P. M., Monday, January 31.