

Legislative Record

OF THE

Eighty-First Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1923

KENNEBEC JOURNAL COMPANY AUGUSTA, MAINE

HOUSE

Wednesday, February 21, 1923 The House met according to adjournment and was called to order by the Speaker.

Prayer by the Rev. Mr. Young of Hallowell.

Journal of previous session read and approved.

(At this point Mr. Wing of Auburn assumed the Chair.)

Papers from the Senate disposed of in concurrence.

Communication from the Governor

STATE OF MAINE, Office of the Governor Feb. 20, 1923.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives:---

During the past two years of my administration as Governor I have become much interested in the question of municipal accounting.

The State Auditor reports to me that the accounting of many of our municipalities is wholly inadequate to meet present day requirements. The bookkeeping of states, counties, cities and towns should be in as simple form as possible so that citizens may understand the public business for unless citizens do so understand they cannot take an intelligent part in public affairs.

It also is important that the bookkeeping methods of cities and towns should be uniform in order that comparisons may be made, for only by comparison can the citizens of one community determine whether or not their public officials are doing their work satisfactorily.

At my suggestion the State Auditor has drafted a bill making it optional with the municipalities within our State to adopt a uniform system of accounting. I am transmit-ting to you herewith the Auditor's report above referred to together with the statistics that accompany it, and I suggest that this be referred to This appropriate committee. an question deserves your careful consideration.

If the bill referred to is adopted by this Legislature it will mean that in the course of a few years most of the minicipalities of the State will have modern accounting systems, the form of which will have been approved by the State Auditor.

Anything that will arouse an interest in public affairs in the minds of our citizens in general makes for better government. I believe we should do everything we can to stimulate the great body of our citizens to study and understand the financial statements of our State, county and municipal governments. To do this we must make these statements understandable.

It cannot be denied that in times past many public transactions that would not bear the light of day debberately have been covered up by elaborate systems of bookkeeping, and complicated figures often have been used for sinister purposes.

I bring this matter to your attention for I believe there is need for reform in the accounting methods of our several municipalities.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) Percival P. Baxter,

Governor of Maine. On motion by Mr. Morrison of Phillips, the communication and accompanying papers were referred to the committee on legal affairs, and sent up for concurrence.

Senate Bills in First Reading

Senate 97: An Act to amend Section 40 of Chapter 117 of the Revised Statutes as amended by Chapter 214 of the Public Laws of 1919, and as further amended by Chapter 219 of the Public Laws of 1921, relating to compensation of clerk of courts of Cumberland county.

Senate 98: An Act to amend Section 2 of Charter 118 of the Revised Statutes as amended by Chapter 125 of the Public Laws of 1921, relating to fees of trial justices.

Senate 99: Resolve in favor of the Maine State Prison at Thomaston for the repair of outside buildings.

Senate 100: Resolve appropriating money for the rurpose of completing the new cell block of the Maine State Prison at Thomaston.

(At this point Speaker Holley resumed the Chair.)

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

Agriculture

By Mr. Baket of Steuben: An Act to repeal Chapter 18? of the Public Laws of 1919, entitled, "An act to assist in the commercial utilization of dog fish."

Legal Affairs

By Mr. Wing of Auburn: Petition of Elmer L. Briggs and seven others in favor of bill licensing real estate brokers.

Sea and Shore Fisheries

By Mr. Boman of Vinalhaven: An Act to amend Section 19 of Chapter 98, Public Laws of 1921, relating to suspension and revocation of lobster licenses.

Taxation

By Mr. Story of Washburn: An Act to amend Section 1 of Chapter 10 of the Revised Statutes, as amended by Chapter 42. Public Laws of 1921, relating to poll tax.

Towns

By Mr. Baker of Steuben: Petition of D. O. Turner and 103 others of Jonesport against act to divide town of Jonesport and incorporate the town of Beals.

By the same gentleman: Petition of Emery Farnsworth and 51 others against same.

By the same gentleman: Petition of E. B. Sawyer and 199 others against same.

Ways and Bridges

By Mr. Winslow of Raymond: Petition of Charles S. Jordan and 16 others of Gray and Raymond in favor of Resolve in favor of road in Gray and Raymond.

By the same gentleman: Petition of Leon P. Carle and ten others of Gray and Raymond in favor of same.

Orders

On motion by Mr. Cherry of Eastport, it was

Ordered, that the House of Representatives grant the use of Representatives hall for the joint committees of Public Utilities and Highways and Bridges immediately after acjournment this day for a hearing on the engineer's report on the proposed bridge between the city of Bath and the town of Woolwich.

On motion by Mr. Granville of Parsonsfield, it was

Ordered, that the use of the hall of the House be granted to the committee on ways and bridges for a hearing for the afternoon of Wednesday, February 28.

Reports of Committees

Mr. Barwise from the committee on education on bill, An Act to require the teaching of the Constitution of the United States in the public and private schools of the State of Maine, reported that legislation

thereon is inexpedient as the subject matter is already covered by existing law.

Report read and accepted and sent up for concurrence

Mr. Gardiner from the committee on judiciary on bill, An Act to change the date of the April term of the supreme judicial court of Somerset county, reported that legislation thereon is inexpedient.

Mr. Saunders from the same committee reported ought not to pss on bill, An Act relating to commissioners of pharmacy, apothecaries and sale of poisons.

Mr. Archibald from the same committee reported same on Resolve proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Maine providing for the election on the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November biennially of Governors, Senators, Representatives and other officers now required to be elected on the second Monday of September biennially.

Reports read and accepted and sent up for concurrence.

Same gentleman from same committee on bill, An Act to unite the Preachers' Aid Society of the Maine Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Preachers' Aid Society of the Eastern Maine Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, reported same in a new draft under same title and that it ought to pass. Report read and accepted and the

Report read and accepted and the new draft ordered printed under the joint rules.

Mr. Maher from the same committee reported ought to pass on bill, An Act to amend Sections 43 and 46, Chapter 18, Revised Statutes of Maine, 1916, relating to optometry.

Maine, 1916, relating to optometry. Mr. Wing from the same committee reported same on bill, An Act relating to Biddeford and Saco Wafer Company.

Mr. Saunders from the same committee reported same on bill, An Act to amend the charter of Home for Aged Men.

Reports read and accepted, and the bills ordered printed under the joint rules.

(At this point Ex-Speaker Charles P. Barnes of Houlton was conducted to seat beside the Speaker by the House Messenger, the members of the House rising and applauding.

the House rising and applauding. First Reading of Printed Bills and Resolves

House 134: An Act to amend Chapter 136 of the Public Laws of 1921, relating to night fishing in certain waters of Kennebec county.

House 135: An Act to amend Sections 38 and 29 of Chapter 8 of the Revised Statutes, relative to the suspension by the Governor of open season for hunting.

House 132: Resolve making an appropriation for co-operative agricultural work between the College of Agriculture of the University of Maine and the United States Department of Agriculture. House 133: Resolve in favor of

House 133: Resolve in favor of Jesse Overlock, secretary of committee on State Prison.

Passed to Be Engrossed

Senate \$5: Resolve in favor of Rupert H. Baxter, chairman recess committee on banks and banking created by the Eightieth Legislature for expenses of said committee.

House 118: An Act to amend Section 52 of Chapter 117 of the Revised Statutes, as amended by Chapter 34 of the Public Laws of 1919, relating to the board of Osteopathic examination and registration.

House 121: An Act to amend Sections 4 and 5 of Chapter 188 of the Public Laws of 1919, relating to the regulation of the practice of the system, method or science of healing known as Osteopathy.

House 122: An Act to amend the charter of York Harbor Village Corporation.

House 127: An Act authorizing the town of York to raise money to aid the York Public Library Association.

House 128: "An Act to extend the Charter of the Quebec Extension Railway Company."

House 129: An Act to extend the charter granted to the Salisbury Cove Water Co., for the taking of water from Lake Wood, and furnishing water to the village of Salisbury Cove, for two years.

House 130: An Act to extend the charter of the R. & T. Cement Railroad.

House 131: An Act to amend Chapter 197 of the Public Laws of 1917, as amended by Chapter 172 of the Public Laws of 1919, relating to the State Department of Health.

(Report accepted, and the bill tabled by Mr. Rounds of Portland, pending third reading.)

House 123: Resolve in favor of the Commissioner of Agriculture for carrying out the provisions of Chapter 81, Public Laws of 1921.

House 124: Resolve in favor of . Highmoor Farm in the town of Monmouth.

House 125: Resolve in favor of animal husbandry.

House 126. Resolve in favor of scientific investigation in agriculture in Aroostook county.

The SPEAKER: The Chair presents, out of order from the Senate, the remonstrance of J. P. Alley of Jonesport and 274 others against the passage of an act entitled "An Act authorizing the town of Jonesport to raise and appropriate money to pay expenses of the hearing before the Legislature of 1921 relative to the division of said town."

In the Senate referred to the committee on judiciary.

In the House, so referred in concurrence,

Orders of the Day

The SPEAKER: Under orders of the day, and under the order passed yesterday, the Chair lays before the House at this time An Act to amend Chapter 3 of the Private and Special Laws of 1915, entitled "An Act providing for pension to employees of the city of Bangor," and recognizes the gentleman from Orrington, Mr. Phillips,

On motion by Mr. Phillips of Orrington, it was voted to retable the bill, pending a report from the city government of Bangor.

The Chair lays before the House, bill, An Act to incorporate the North Orrington Cemetery Association, tabled by Mr. Phillips of Orrington on February 9, pending reference to a committee.

On motion by Mr. Phillips of Orrington, the bill was referred to the committee on legal affairs.

Mr. WINN of Lisbon: Mr. Speaker, I now move you that we take from table the order tabled by me yesterday relative to the question to be asked of the Supreme Judicial Court of the State.

The motion prevailed.

Mr. WINN: I now move the adoption of the same: and I want to say that I have taken the opportunity of inquiring of various attorneys in regard to the law in controversy, and I have yet failed to find an attorney. young, middle-aged or old, who is not of ' opinion that this law is not in keeping with the Constitution of the State of Maine. And if it is not, I believe that we, as legislators here today. should ask for an opinion and that was the reason for putting in my order. I understand by some people opposed to it that they believe it should be tested all at once by towns and cities and the like of that; but I believe that the 81st session of the Legislature has the power vested in it by the Constitution of the State of Maine to ask for an opinion of the Supreme Court, and 1 believe that at this present moment, while the machinery of the Legislature is in action and while we are in session here, we should take advantage of that constitutional right and give service to the people of the State of Maine in regard to the opinion as to whether that law is in accordance with the Constitution of the State of Maine; and I sincerely hope and firmly believe that the members of this 81st Legislature will vote in favor of asking for the opinion of the court.

Mr. ARCHIBALD of Houlton: Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislature: There is a rather fundamental question involved here from the standpoint of the Legislature itself. We are asking to have a question submitted to the Supreme Court of Maine to determine the constitutionality of a Statute which was passed two years ago. is now on the Statute books, and concerning which, at this present time. I think I am correct in saying there is no pending legislation before this Legislature.

We had a flurry in the House here a while ago in relation to this same bill, and after some discussion and the creation of a committee of conference, it was committed to a joint committee. After this joint committee met and had its hearings, it reported unanimously back to this Legislature that the bill ought not to pass. Now after that report came back, the report was accepted, and that report having been accepted, that action, as I understand it, takes this question entirely out of the hands of the 81st Legislature. In other words, what I mean to say is this, that by the acceptance of that report the bill that was introduced is no longer pending before the 81st Legislature. Now, if that is true, anything else that may be said on the subject is very readily seen to be rather immaterial; but in view of the fact that this matter has received so much discussion. I think it would be wise to understand what the real question here involved is. We are asking the judges of the Supreme Court of Maine to render an opinion as to the constitutionality of a Statute which this Legislature never passed at all. and we are substantially asking you---the proponents of this order are-to sustain an order in the face of the unanimous report of a committee on a bill that it

ought not to pass and is now out of this House; and this Legislature is not the judge as to whether or not the occasion exists for the submission of this question to the court. The court should be the judge of that, and will first determine whether, under the laws of the State, such a "solemn occasion" now exists as will permit it even to render such an opinion as we are asking for here now. The court in Maine has already passed upon that question, and it says in very clear terms "that such an occasion does not exist unless the body making the inquiry has occasion to consider and act upon the questions submitted in the exercise of the legislative or executive powers intrusted to it by the Constitution and laws of the State." Now that situation has gone by and the matter is no longer pending here.

In the same opinion the court says this: "Many opinions of the Justices have been required and given, but it is found upon examination that they were given in cases where the branch of the government requiring the opinion had pending before it some question concerning which doubts existed as to its power and authority, or as to the power of some subordinate officer under the Constitution, or under existing statutes, and where the settlement of such doubt was necessary to enable it, in the exercise of its proper function, to act legally and intelligently upon the pending questions."

Now this situation that exists here this morning, I submit, leaves this matter entirely outside of the scope of that opinion. No such condition exists, and I cannot see how in the light of that opinion the judges themselves, being the judges as to whether or not "solemn occasion" arises, can possibly hold that such an occasion does exist, and I am satisfied in my mind that they will state to this Legislature that they would refuse to give an opinion because there is no "solemn occasion." Now if that is the fact, and if it is the unquestionable fact that, after serious consideration of this subject involving an act passed two years ago, this Legislature by its ioint committee has made a unanimous report on this bill, it seems to me that we are going a long way in the wrong direction when we start a procedent in this Legislature to attempt to override the unanimous report of a joint standing committee;

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and I trust that this order will not have passage.

Mr. CUMMINGS, of Portland: The remarks of the ¹ast gentleman (Mr. Archibald) seem to have back of them some inherent weakness I cannot imagine any good and sound reason why a man should object to have an opinion from the Supreme Court upon the validity of any statute. The only reason that I can conceive of a man taking that position is that he fears it might upset his desires. I believe it is perfectly proper that this Legislature should inquire, if it so desires, as to the constitutionality of the existing laws. and I certainly hope that this order will have passage. It can do no harm. If the court says that the law passed in 1921 is constitutional, that settles the question. It is undoubtedly true and 1 believe it is a matter of common knowledge that there is a very grave doubt in the minds of attorneys as to the constitutionality of that law. And I can conceive of no reason why it is not fitting and proper that that matter should be settled now and settled once for all.

Mr. BARWISE, of Bangor: Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen. The question before us is not the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of this law, but the question before us is the propriety of our asking the question at all under these circumstances. That is the only que tion; the propriety of our asking the question at all under these circumstances. This Legislature is not the place for set-tling disputed questions of law. It is not our business to ask the court to settle all sorts of problems which may arise as to the constitutionality or unconstitutionality of various laws of the State of Maine. As the gentleman from Houlton, (Mr. Archibald) just pointed out to you, there is no business before the House that involves this question. We might just as well ask the question of the constitutionality of any other statute that we find in the whole range of the Revised Statutes. That would be just as pertinent to anything before this House as the question of the constitutionality of poll taxes for women, or any other question that you might raise. There is no question before this Legislature upon which we can properly address such a query to the Supreme Court, and anyone who has read Justice Savage's opinion knows that the Supreme Court is not answering idle questions. It will simply make a laughing stock of us to put such a question up to them when there is no issue behind it, and which they would not be bound to answer and which they would not answer anyway, unless there were some question pending and we had some constitutional reason for asking it. I don't think that we, particularly the lawyers of this House, want to make this Legislature ridiculous by asking questions that the Supreme Court will laugh a, us for asking.

Mr. CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, I would like to inquire whether I am wrong in the assumption that this House has a perfect right to ask the Supreme Court for its opinion upon the constitutionality of an existing haw, even if there is not something pending at the present time in relation to it.

The SPEAKER: The Chair will state, as it recalls the Rules, that the Legislature ...ay ask the opinion of the Supreme Court. The Chair does not recall that the matter of a pending question is stated within the Rules. The Chair would be very pleased to have the Rules read by any Representative in the hall for enlightenment.

Mr. HAMILTON of Caribou: Mr. Speaker, I had no intention of taking part in a question of this importance, because I am a new member here: but when a brother of mine states that it is an idle question, referring to this question of taxation of bank stock which our bankers have told us is mighty important, I take exception to it. Now the doubt has arisen whether this tax act is legal or not, and I say that it is mighty important, and that it is not an idle question for the Supreme Court of the State of Maine to settle that question.

Now as far as the question of removing a statute is concerned we will accept the report of the committee, but I say in the interest of the bankers of the State of Maine that they want to know whether that tax that is now existing is legal or not, and it is mighty important for them, as well as for the different towns and cities throughout the State, to find out whether we are going to be taxed here or whether we are going to be taxed at home: and I think it is a good question for our judges to decide. The SPEAKER: The Chair will state, in answer to the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Cummings, 'hat Section three, of Article VI of the Constitution of Maine says: "They shall be obliged."—that is the Supreme Court—"to give their opinhan upon important questions of law, and upon solemn occasions, when required by the Governor, Council, Senaie or House of Representatives." There is nothing there relating to a pending question The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Houlton, Mr. Archibald.

ARCHIBALD: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Under the laws of the Constitution that have just been read by the Chair the language is used "solemn occasions:" and in the opinion that I have already read it was held that they themselves are the judges as to whether or not such a solemn occasion exists as I have already stated, and they say this, "That it is suf-ficient to say that such an occasion does not exist unless the body making the inquiry has occasion to consider an act upon the question submitted in the exercise of the legislative or executive powers entrusted to it by the constitutional laws of the State, and, citing a Massachusetts opinion, 'Many opinions of the Justices have been required and given but it has been found upon examition that they were given in cases where the branch of the government requiring them to be given had pending before it some question concerning which doubts existed as to its power and authority.

The SPEAKER: The Chair does not propose to rule whether it is a "solemn occasion" or not, inasmuch as that seems to be the duty of the Court. The pending question is on the passage of the order.

Mr. BARWISE: Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence to add just another word. The opinion seems to prevail among some of my seat-mates here, and possibly among other members, that this is the only way to get an opinion of the Supreme Court. I want to disabuse the minds of the members of the House on that point. It is the simplest matter in the world to get the opinion of the Supreme Court on this matter. If a bill in equity is filed by any bank or any person interested, then you will have the question properly before the Court. What I tried to impress upon

this House was that this House, now, in the present circumstances, has no business to take the question up. It is not before us as any particular business. If it is a matter that interests the bankers or any individual in Maine. It is a very small matter for them to go into Court and get the opinion of the Supreme Court in the proper way on the question.

Mr. WINN of Lisbon: Mr. Speaker, realize fully that if the bankers. £ or any large interests, want the opinion of the Supreme Court, they can get it very readily by paying for the same: but when the people want such a legal opinion they have got to have the finances to back it up. I wrote down on a piece of paper-it may be a crude way to do it, and I probably would not do it if I were a lawyer-but I wrote down that you can ask for an opinion on important questions of law. Of course to define it, I can only define it the same as an ordinary, everyday person would do—just the same as the people whom we represent would define the law and I believe that it is an important question and that this is a "solemn occasion." It is a "solemn occasion" where, through the acts of the last session of the Legislature. the people of the State of Maine lost some \$110,000 of taxes, and it would seem to me-and I hope that enough of the rest of you will see it the same way--that we should at least ask the Supreme Court their opinion; and, if we are asking something from them on which there is a difference of opinion, as there seems to be among the legal talent, it is up to them to decide that question, I am in favor of asking, and am not ashamed to go on record as asking the opinion of the great Supreme Court of Maine on any question, whether we have the right to ask it or not; and I think that they will answer any question that we ask them and answer it honestly and fearlessly. As I say, I am not ashamed for one, and I believe there are others in the Legislature who are not ashamed to ask them any such question. I believe it is our duty, and that the citizens of the State of Maine would become more enlightened if they would ask more questions of men of the higher courts of this State, and that there would not be that great unrest w'ich we see about us if we all took upon ourselves to ask questions about things we do not understand. We do not understand, and that is why we are asking the Supreme Court to give us their opinion. I certainly hope the motion will prevail.

Mr. PALMER of Island Falls: Mr. Speaker, through the Chair, I would like to ask the gentleman from Lisbon, Mr. Winn, why he did not have this question put before the Supreme Court when the question was pending?

The SPEAKER: The gentleman from Lisbon, Mr. Winn, may answer the question through the Chair.

Mr. WINN: Mr. Speaker, I will say that if did not occur to me at that time and not being an attorney, as I said before, I did not foresee that this question would be asked. I believe from reading the Constitution of the State of Maine, as I have said before, that we have the power to ask questions in regard to the law.

Mr. PALMER: Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House: It seems to me that the easiest way to get an opinion on this order is to put in a bill again. If they want to make themselves so ridiculous as to put in another banking bill and have if turned down that will be all right, but why should the House reverse itself on its decision in regard to the bill itself?

On motion by Mr. Maher of Augusta, the rules were suspended, and Mr. Cummings of Portland was given unanimous consent to speak again on the matter in question.

Mr. CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the gentlemen on the other side of this question seek only evasion. That is the sum and substance of the whole thing. They desire to evade this question. They desire to prevent its being put up to the Supreme Court and I repeat that they show a conscious realization that they are very likely wrong in their contention. I believe the constitutional right of this House to ask this question is undoubted and I hope that the order will have passage.

The SPEAKER: The pending question is on the passage of the order as moved by the gentleman from Lisbon. Mr. Winn.

Mr. WINN: Mr. Speaker, I call for the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER: All those who are in favor of the yeas and nays will rise.

A sufficient number having arisen

the yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER: Is the House ready for the question? The Clerk will call the roll, and as many as are in favor of the passage of this order as moved by the gentleman from Lisbon, Mr. Winn, will say yes when their names are called, and those opposed will say no. The Clerk will call the roll.

YEA—Ayer, Bartlett of Hanover, Bartlett of Waterville, Belliveau, Benoit, Boman, Brett, Burns, Cates, Crowley, Cummings, Dilling, Dunbar, Dunn, Edwards, Finnell, Gagne, Gagnon, Gardiner, Gillespie, Gilmour, Goldthwaite, Hallett, Hamilton, Hayes of Chelsea, Hobbs, Hoimes, Jacobs, Jewett, Jordan of Cape Elizabeth, Jordan of Westbrook, Macomber, Maher, McDonald, McIlheron, Morse of Bath, Nadeau, Overlock, Owens, Pendleton, Perry, Ramsdell, Runney, Ray, Rowell, Sparrow, Staples, Stitham, Stratton., Teague, Whitney, Williams, Winn, Winslow—54.

NAY-Adams of Liberty, Adams of Litchfield, Archibald, Atwood, Baker, Barwise, Beckett, Bisbee, Blaisdell, Boulter, Bradbury, Brewster, Brown, Chalmers, Cherry, Clarke, Conant, Crafts, Curtis, Dain, Douglas, Downing, Drake, Dudley, Farley, Foss, Garmage, Gile, Granville, Greenleaf, Hale, Hammond, Hayes of Gorham, Hayford, Heal Hodgkins, Houghten, Hutchinson, Johnson, Jones, Kerf, Keene Kitchen, Lamson, Leathers, Leland, Littlefield, Lord of South Portiand, Lord of Wells, Ludgate, Martin, Melcher, Moody, Morrison, Nevins, Newcomb, Nickerson, O'Connell, Palmer, Perkins, Phillips, Pierce, Pinkham, Piper, Reed, Rogers, Rounds, Saunders, Sayward, Smith, Stevens, Storm, Story, Stratton, Tarr, Thomas of Chesterville, Thomas of Leeds, Tilden, Towne, Wecks, Willis, Wing, Wood-83.

ABSENT-Bickford, Fickett, Gauvin, Gordon, Knight, Morse of Greene, Nichols, Oakes, Plummer, Sanders, Siddall, Small, White-14, The SUPEVIN

The SPEAKER: Fifty-four having voted in the affirmative, and 8? in the negative, the order failed of passage.

On motion by Mr. Phillips of Orrington, it was voted to take from the table an act relating to income and appropriations of the several departments and State institutions, tabled by that gentleman on February 2, pending reference; and on further motion by the same gentlemen, the bill was referred to the committee created for the purpose of considering the Cole report.

On motion of Mr. Perry of Saco, Adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning.