

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record

OF THE

Eighty-Ninth Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1939

KENNEBEC JOURNAL COMPANY
AUGUSTA, MAINE

SENATE

Thursday, January 12, 1939.

The Senate was called to order by the President.

Prayer by the Reverend Robert Beecher of Hallowell.

Journal of yesterday read and approved.

Order

(Out of Order)

On motion by Mr. Spear of Cumberland, out of order and under suspension of the rules, it was

Ordered, the House concurring, that when the Senate and House adjourn, they adjourn to meet on Tuesday, January 17th, 1939 at four-thirty in the afternoon. (S. P. 60)

Sent down for concurrence.

Subsequently the foregoing order was returned from the House having been read and passed in concurrence.

Papers from the House disposed of in concurrence.

Communication from the Secretary of State

State of Maine
Department of State.

Augusta, Maine, January 9, 1939.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in State of Maine Legislature assembled:

Pursuant to Article 5, Part 4, Section 2 of the constitution I have the honor to herewith transmit two bonds of the Honorable Belmont H. Smith, Treasurer of State.

Very truly yours,
FREDERICK ROBIE,
Secretary of State.

(S. P. 59)

Which was read and referred to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

Sent down for concurrence.

The following bills and resolves were received and on recommendation by the Committee on Reference of Bills, were referred to the following committees:

Claims

Mr. Beckett of Washington presented "Resolve in Favor of Frank

C. McIntyre of Lawrence Station, Charlotte County, New Brunswick." (S. P. 53)

Sent down for concurrence.

Judiciary

Mr. Chase of Washington presented bill "An Act Relating to Adoption of Children." (S. P. 54) (500 copies ordered printed.) Sent down for concurrence.

Legal Affairs

Mr. Boucher of Androscoggin presented bill "An Act to Grant a New Charter to the City of Lewiston." (S. P. 55)

(1500 copies ordered printed.) Sent down for concurrence.

Pensions

Mr. Cook of Somerset presented "Resolve Providing for a State Pension for Ida May Tate of Palmyra." (S. P. 56)

Sent down for concurrence.

Ways and Bridges

Mr. Spear of Cumberland presented "Resolve in Favor of the Town of Scarborough." (S. P. 57)

The same Senator presented "Resolve in Favor of the Town of Cape Elizabeth." (S. P. 58)

Sent down for concurrence.

Order

Mr. Wentworth of York presented the following order:

Ordered, the House concurring, that a committee be appointed, two on the part of the Senate and three on the part of the House, to study the advisability of a contributory retirement system for Maine, said committee to make its report during this legislative session by bill or otherwise.

Mr. WENTWORTH: Mr. President, I presume that probably there are many members of this legislature who do not even realize that we have a state pension for state employees. I didn't know it until I came in contact with it during my work on the Budget Committee. And I became interested because I thought that here was another department that might grow into a big snowball that would perhaps never melt.

This law was put on the books back in 1919 and I think the first pension was paid in 1920 and

amounted to around \$414. It has now grown to \$27,000 and has been going on for about twenty years, and it has got to the point where there are any number who could come into this scheme.

The law requires that a state employee may be pensioned at half pay after twenty-five years of service or at the age of seventy after twenty years of service, and the half pay would be gauged on the average of the salary for the last five years.

I consider it an unfair proposition because a person may work for at least fifteen years and then have to go out on account of ill health or something and have absolutely nothing coming to him or her. I can also see where this is going to amount to a big sum in a short time. In 1924 the Maine Teachers' Pension scheme was not on a contributory basis and in that year they passed a law making it contributory, and, I believe, mandatory.

At that time it cost the state \$53,421 and since that time they have built up a fund—and the money all belongs to the teachers—of \$455,790. But, of course, they had to keep on going on a non-contributory basis and that has not reached the saturation point yet and it costs today out of school funds \$237,741. And on a non-contributory basis there are 577 teachers while on a contributory basis there are 2,744.

Now when this pension scheme was first started we had about 2,000 employees and today we have 3300 so it seemed to me that this matter was worth investigating and if we can build up something better, why so much for the good of the state.

Mr. CHAMBERLAIN of Penobscot: Mr. President, I believe that the Senate should give very serious consideration to making all pensions, as far as possible, contributory and that those who receive pensions should have considerable responsibility and initiative in connecting themselves with it, and I believe we should give very serious consideration to this matter.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the Senate is on the passage of the order presented by the Senator from York, Senator Wentworth. Is the Senate ready for the question?

Thereupon the order received a passage and the Chair appointed as members of such committee on the part of the Senate, Senators Tompkins of Aroostook and Sanborn of Cumberland.

Sent down for concurrence.

Orders of the Day

On motion by Mr. Burns of Aroostook, the Senate voted to take from the table Resolve in Favor of Charles Murray (S. P. 24) tabled by that Senator on January 10, 1939 pending reference; and on further motion by the same Senator, the bill was referred to the Committee on Claims.

Sent down for concurrence.

Miss LAUGHLIN of Cumberland: Mr. President, I rise to a question of personal privilege, if I may, and I should like to take about two minutes of the time of the Senate. I notice from this annual review, which we all have on our desks, published by the Lewiston Journal, that the great problem before this legislature is to raise more money; that we must have more money and lots of it. And in every group of members the question comes up, "Have we got to have more money and if so how shall we get it?" The members of the Press have asked me if I believe that we need from two to four millions more money. So I thought that I would take a minute or two on the floor of the Senate to express my position, if I may have that privilege.

The PRESIDENT: The Senator may proceed.

Miss LAUGHLIN: I would like to say that I believe that, with the combination of certain activities of the state that need to be combined and with the reallocation of appropriations and, above all, with a thorough study of relief needs and a system of relief based on need solely, and remembering the principle expressed in the Republican platform of 1934 that if some receive others must pay, and in accord with the views expressed this morning by the Senator from York (Senator Wentworth) — believing these things, and from my study of the appropriations and expenditures of the last two years and of other sessions when I have been here, I believe that if these things are done we will not need any more money or any increased expenditures.

And believing that, I want to say at the start of this session that unless and until I am convinced by irrefutable evidence that the essential activities of the state—essential activities—need any more money that I, as a member of this legislature, shall vote against any and all new or increased taxation.

The PRESIDENT: Is there any further business to come before the Senate?

On motion by Mr. Spear of Cumberland

Adjourned until Tuesday afternoon, January 17, 1939, at four-thirty o'clock.