

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEVENTH REVISION

THE
REVISED STATUTES

OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

PASSED AUGUST 5, 1930, AND TAKING
EFFECT NOVEMBER 10, 1930



By the Authority of the Legislature

AUGUSTA
KENNEBEC JOURNAL PRINT

CHAPTER 153.

Workhouses. Houses of Correction.

Workhouses.

Sec. 1. Workhouse provided by any town; persons liable to commitment. R. S. c. 143, § 1. Any town may erect or provide a workhouse for the employment and support of persons of the following description: all poor and indigent persons, maintained by or receiving alms from the town; all able-bodied persons not having estate or means otherwise to maintain themselves, who refuse or neglect to work; all who live a dissolute and vagrant life and exercise no ordinary calling or lawful business sufficient to gain an honest livelihood; and all such persons, as spend their time and property in public houses, to the neglect of their proper business, or by otherwise misspending what they earn, to the impoverishment of themselves and their families, are likely to become paupers. Any workhouse may, by vote of the town, be discontinued, or applied to other uses. Until such workhouse is thus provided the almshouse or any part thereof may be used for that purpose.

See c. 33, § 20; 11 Me. 210; 65 Me. 121.

Sec. 2. Overseers of poor to have charge; may appoint a master. R. S. c. 143, § 2. Such workhouse shall be in charge of the overseers of the poor of the town maintaining the same, who shall have the inspection and government thereof, with power to appoint a master and needful assistants for the more immediate care and superintendence of the persons received or employed therein.

Sec. 3. Overseers may make regulations. R. S. c. 143, § 3. The overseers, as occasion requires, shall hold meetings on the business of their office; and make needful orders and regulations for such house, to be binding until the next town meeting, when they shall be submitted to the consideration of the inhabitants; and such as are approved at said meeting shall remain in force until revoked by the town.

Sec. 4. Persons not having legal settlement may be committed. R. S. c. 143, § 4. When any person, not having a legal settlement in any town in the state, becomes idle or indigent, he may be committed to the workhouse provided for the town in which he resides, to be employed, if able to labor, in the same manner, and to be subject to the same rules as the other persons thereto committed.

See c. 33, § 38.

Sec. 5. Inmates, if able, to be kept employed. R. S. c. 143, § 5. Every person committed to such workhouse, if able to work, shall be kept diligently employed during the term of his commitment. For idleness, obstinacy, or disorderly conduct, he may be punished as provided by the lawful regulations of the house.

Houses of Correction.

Sec. 6. Rogues, vagabonds, idle persons, etc., may be committed. R. S. c. 143, § 6. A municipal or police court, or trial justice in his county, on complaint under oath may commit to jail or to the house of correction in the town

where the person belongs or is found, for a term of not more than ninety days, all rogues, vagabonds, and idle persons going about in any town in the county, begging; persons using any subtle craft, jugglery, or unlawful games, or plays, or for the sake of gain pretending to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry, to tell destinies or fortunes, or to discover lost or stolen goods; common pipers, fiddlers, runaways, drunkards, night-walkers, railers, brawlers, and pilferers; persons wanton or lascivious in speech or behavior, or neglecting their callings or employments, mispending what they earn and not providing for the support of themselves and their families; all idle and disorderly persons having no visible means of support, neglecting all lawful calling or employment; and all idle and disorderly persons who neglect all lawful calling or employment and mispend their time by frequenting disorderly houses, houses of ill fame, gaming-houses, or tippling-shops.

See c. 33, §§ 35, 38; 123 Me. 394.

Sec. 7. Town may maintain a house of correction. R. S. c. 143, § 7. A town, at its own expense, may build and maintain a house of correction. Until such house of correction is so built, the almshouse or any part thereof may be used for that purpose.

Sec. 8. Overseers of poor to have charge of house of correction. R. S. c. 143, § 8. Such house of correction shall be in charge of the overseers of the poor of the town maintaining the same, who shall have the inspection and government of the same, and may establish from time to time, such rules and orders not repugnant to law, as they deem necessary for governing and punishing persons lawfully committed thereto. When an almshouse is used for a house of correction, the master thereof shall be master of the house of correction; but in other cases the overseers thereof shall appoint a suitable master, removable at their pleasure, and may fix his compensation. The overseers, from time to time, shall examine into the prudential concerns and management of such house, and see that the master faithfully discharges his duty.

Sec. 9. Overseers to order supplies of suitable food and clothing to persons committed. R. S. c. 143, § 9. Every person committed to such house of correction shall be supplied with suitable food and clothing, and if sick, with such medical attendance and care as the overseers order; and all expenses incurred for commitment and maintenance, exceeding the earnings of the person confined, shall be paid by the town where such prisoner has his legal settlement, or by his kindred as hereinafter provided.

Sec. 10. Persons committed to custody may be set to work. R. S. c. 143, § 10. The master of such house may set to work all persons committed to his custody, so far as they are able, during the time of their confinement; and if their deportment renders it expedient, he may impose shackles or fetters to prevent resistance or escape, without unnecessarily inflicting pain or interrupting labor.

Sec. 11. Insubordination; supply of food may be abridged. R. S. c. 143, § 11. If a prisoner is stubborn, disorderly, idle, refractory, or refuses to perform his appointed task in a proper manner, the master may abridge his supply of food until he complies with the reasonable requirements of the master and overseers.

Sec. 12. Actual paupers may be subject to extension of confinement. R. S. c. 143, § 12. Notwithstanding the payment of costs and expenses, if the prisoner has actually received relief as a pauper, the overseers of the poor where the house is, or of the town to which he belongs, on complaint to the justice

or court by whom he was committed, may procure an extension of the confinement, for not more than thirty days at a time, by the judge or justice; and such application may be renewed, if occasion requires it, on like complaint; and in all cases the prisoners shall be brought before the justice or court to answer to the complaint.

Sec. 13. Pauper notice to be given to towns where prisoner has settlement. R. S. c. 143, § 13. Such masters shall, within ten days after commitment of any person to such house of correction, give notice thereof to the overseers of the poor of the town where it is situated, and if the prisoner has actually received relief as a pauper, said overseers shall give the same notice thereof to the overseers of the poor of the town of his legal settlement, as is required in other cases in which paupers become chargeable in places where they have no legal settlement.

See c. 33, § 31; 22 Me. 389; *51 Me. 458.

Sec. 14. Earnings and expenditures of prisoners to be accounted for; excess earnings, how disposed of. R. S. c. 143, § 14. The master shall keep an exact account of the earnings of each prisoner, and of the expense incurred for commitment and maintenance, specifying the time of his commitment and liberation, and present it, on oath, to the overseers of the poor of the town where such house is established, annually and oftener if directed; and the town may recover the amount of such expenses after deducting the earnings of the prisoner, from the town where such prisoner has his legal settlement. If such account shows the earnings of such prisoner to exceed the expenses incurred for commitment and maintenance of said prisoner, such excess may be paid by the overseers of the poor to, or for the benefit of, the dependent family or kindred of said prisoner.

Sec. 15. Remedy against kindred. R. S. c. 143, § 15. If there are kindred, obliged by law to maintain the prisoner as provided in sections fifteen to nineteen inclusive of chapter thirty-three, such master, or the town obliged to pay his account, has the same remedy against such kindred, as is provided in that chapter for towns incurring expense for relief and support of paupers.

Sec. 16. Persons to be committed only on conviction. R. S. c. 143, § 16. Persons shall be committed to workhouses, or houses of correction, only upon conviction of the offenses, acts, or conditions for which such commitments are by law authorized, before some municipal or police court, or trial justice. Commitments to workhouses may be for terms of not more than three months.

Keepers of houses of correction and workhouses to give notice of births and deaths occurring therein, c. 72, § 23.
To give notice to U. S. immigration officers of aliens committed, c. 34, §§ 1, 2.