

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record

OF THE

Eighty-Fourth Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1929

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there are to it will be brought up on the floor of the House.

Thereupon the bill was passed to be engrossed.

The President laid before the Senate, an act relating to the operation of motor vehicles on the highways (S. D. 399) tabled on April 9th by Mr. Oakes of Cumberland pending adoption of Senate Amendment B; and on motion by that Senator the bill was retabled.

The President laid before the Senate, resolve in favor of the State School for Girls (S. D. 166) tabled on April 9th by Mr. Littlefield of York pending adoption of House Amendment A in concurrence.

On motion by that Senator the Senate voted to recede from its former position and concur with the House in the adoption of House Amendment A.

Thereupon, the same Senator offered Senate Amendment A and moved its adoption: "Senate Amendment A to Senate Paper 414, Senate Document 166 entitled, 'Resolve in favor of State School for Girls.' Strike out in the fourth line the words 'eighty-six thousand five hundred forty' and insert in place thereof the words 'eighty-five thousand seven hundred forty.' Amend further by striking out the following 'electric refrigerator for use as central storage of perishable food, \$800.'"

Senate Amendment A was adopted and the resolve as amended by House Amendment A and Senate Amendment A was passed to be engrossed in non-concurrence.

The President laid before the Senate, an act to exempt certain non-resident motor vehicles from registration while in this State for display, etc. (H. D. 808) tabled on April 9th by Mr. Littlefield of York pending second reading; and on motion by that Senator the bill was given its second reading.

Thereupon, the same Senator offered Senate Amendment A and moved its adoption: "Senate Amendment A to House Paper 1736 (H. D. 808). Amend the third paragraph of Section One by striking out after the words 'a fee of,' the word 'five' and inserting in place thereof the word 'ten.'"

Senate Amendment A was adopt-

ed and the bill as so amended was passed to be engrossed in non-concurrence.

The President laid before the Senate, an act to create a commissioner of highways (S. D. 363) tabled on April 9th by Mr. Minott of Cumberland pending consideration; and on motion by that Senator the bill was retabled.

The President laid before the Senate, resolve relating to the removal of the Highway Commissioners (S. D. 333) tabled on April 9th by Mr. Spear of Cumberland pending consideration.

Mr. SPEAR of Cumberland: Mr. President, the purpose for which this resolve was introduced having been disposed of I now move that the resolve be indefinitely postponed.

The motion to indefinitely postpone prevailed.

The President laid before the Senate, Senate Report from the Committee on Ways and Bridges, Majority Report, "Ought to Pass in a New Draft"; Minority Report, "Ought Not to Pass," on Resolve providing for an additional issue of highway and bridge bonds. (S. D. 76), tabled on April 9th by Mr. Dwinal of Knox, pending acceptance of report.

Mr. DWINAL of Knox: Mr. President, when future historians write the history of the State of Maine, I believe that it will be noted that the outstanding accomplishment of this period was the construction of a system of improved highways.

When the obstacles with which we have to contend, growing out of our climate, weather conditions and other natural causes are taken into consideration, the progress which we have made in this construction in the last twenty years is truly remarkable. With an area to be served equal to that of all the other New England states combined, and a population of only 750,000 people as compared with theirs of approximately eight millions; and with two billions of wealth from which to draw in comparison with the twenty-four billions from which they may draw, we have constructed a system of highways which, if

we may except their metropolitan areas, equals if it does not excel those systems of our sister states.

The present time, this week, is a critical time in the progress of that development for I believe that the completion of our highway system and the reconstruction of its worn out parts depends upon the passage of this resolve and its subsequent approval by the people of the State. We have now constructed 1896 miles of our State system. There remains to be constructed 257 miles but many of the portions which were first built from fifteen to twenty years ago for the travel which was then anticipated, under the heavier travel which they have been called upon to serve in the last few years have worn out and now need to be reconstructed, and many of these portions lie in localities where the traffic is heavier. Traffic counts and road surveys establish the fact that the volume of our traffic doubled between the years 1916 and 1919 and also that it doubled again between the years 1919 and 1927. Present indications are that next year's figures will show that it has doubled yet again between the years 1927 and 1930.

Under these conditions of travel many of the portions of that system which were originally constructed with gravel surface, now need to be resurfaced with macadam or cement because under heavy travel gravel roads are expensive to maintain. Good business demands that this change be made and this bond issue financially provides for it. Many of the macadam portions of the system now need to be resurfaced and widened and under the bond issue plan that also will be possible.

The twenty million dollars which the issue of these bonds will provide, spread over a period of five years will give one million a year for our bridges and three million dollars each year for the construction of highways. In addition to those funds, it will release for the State of Maine five million dollars of Federal aid funds in addition to the \$1,439,000 which has already been allotted to us and incidentally, I believe that the \$103,000 which has now been charged against us on previous construction will then be

available for some other Federal aid project.

In addition to these funds, this plan for the financing of our highways will release for our state-aid and third class construction all of the gas tax money, amounting to approximately three million dollars annually and also a half million dollars more each year from the automobile registration fees. This money will enable us to complete the 257 miles of our system which up to date have not been constructed and will enable us to build 469 miles of worn out portions of that system, and in addition to meet our obligations on our state-aid roads and third class construction projects. And all this will be accomplished under this plan without imposing any additional burden on the people of the state.

The resolve provides that the bonds shall be matured serially over a period of twenty-five years and they shall be non-reissuable and it is proposed that the money for retiring them as they mature and the payment of interest charges shall annually be taken from the automobile registration fees, and after having serviced all of our outstanding bonds amounting to thirteen million and this new issue of twenty millions, there will still remain a balance of approximately five hundred thousand dollars each year to be put on our roads. So we see under this plan, the financial structure which will support our highway system will be sound. The roads will still continue to pay for themselves.

We cannot afford to take any backward step in our highway program. We are entering upon a period of industrial development which promises much for the increased prosperity of the citizens of the State. We are beginning to demonstrate the fact that we possess the same pioneer qualities which characterized our ancestors, for we are no longer content to rely solely upon the industries which our fathers and grandfathers established and upon which they prospered fifty years ago. Today all over Maine in every section are to be found substantial citizens who are taking an interest and active part in the program to develop the State along the lines for which it is best adapted. Under the direction of the Development Commission which is organizing and making effective this new Maine

spirit and surveys are being made of our natural resources and capabilities for the purpose of determining what things can be done in Maine as well as they can be done anywhere else and what other things can be done better here. Upon the basis of the facts that these surveys disclose, it is proposed to initiate a program of industrial development which will establish industry which under economic law should prosper, but the experience of other states teaches us that an adequate system of improved highways is necessary for any development.

A careful study of the New England food market is being made, the richest market in the country of its kind, for the purpose of determining what portion should belong to the farms of this State, for with a population of seven million people who have the money with which to buy, located at our very doors with easy access and quick delivery, there is no economic reason why Maine should be restricted in the output of her agricultural products which we, ourselves, may consume. That is the situation today, with the exception of our potato crop. In fact, it is worse than that for we are importing food-stuff.

When these problems have been solved, our improved highways will become the arteries through which we will establish a more profitable and industrial life.

If an example is desired, we might well refer to the experience of the state of North Carolina. Fifteen years ago North Carolina was one of the backward states of the Union, but since 1920 she has developed her water powers and constructed a system of state roads, and incidentally did it on the proceeds of a bond issue, and today she ranks third in the Union in the payment of income taxes to the Federal government, and that is an excellent barometer of the prosperity of her citizens.

All that North Carolina has, we have and more and her problem of development is comprehensive. We are justified in looking forward to the times when we shall have an increased prosperity, and in the passage of this resolve we are bringing the day nearer when we may effect the realization of that hope.

There are certain features of the road system with which members of the road and bridge committee are more familiar than am I, and I will

yield to the Senator from Piscataquis, Senator Leland.

The PRESIDENT: The Chair will state that there is no motion pending before the Senate.

Mr. DWINAL: Mr. President, I will move the majority report "ought to pass" be accepted.

Mr. LELAND: Mr. President, speaking very briefly to the motion of the Senator from Knox, (Senator Dwinal), it hardly seems necessary and I am quite reluctant to take up much of the time of this body this morning in the discussion of this highway problem. After the very able discussion of the subject by the Senator from Knox (Senator Dwinal) I feel there is very little I could add that would be of assistance in reaching a conclusion on this matter. It does seem fitting, however, that some member of the Ways and Bridges Committee who have given such careful and earnest consideration to this subject during the past months of this session, should say just a word in relation to the work of that committee and give some of the reasons that have governed them in reaching a majority report in this matter.

I think perhaps I might touch very briefly upon some of the objections we have heard raised for the completion of further construction of our trunk line system. We have been told that we are mortgaging the future, that future generations will have to pay the bills for roads which will be worn out long before the bonds have been retired. This is, I think, entirely different from the actual facts in the case and the situation as the Ways and Bridges Committee has seen it.

It has seemed to us in the first place a very real need, a very real demand existed for the hastening of our highway construction, that is the people are demanding that a completion of our trunk line system be made much more rapidly than it is possible to make by any form of tax or revenue producer that it is possible to enact at this time and it has seemed to us that while it is true we are mortgaging future receipts, those receipts are as certain as anything human is certain, and that revenue from automobile registration fees and gasoline tax will increase, and it seems to us the question resolves itself

into a problem and question whether the completion of those lines by the borrowing of money, renting the state's credit and the problem of securing money at the rate of four per cent interest, whether the value to the State would not more than offset this interest charge. There are several reasons for believing this is the case. For instance, the maintenance of these gravel roads over which much of the heavy traffic is borne, the maintenance charge would be reduced.

For the past two weeks we have seen on these highways of gravel construction the trucks, graders and scrapers at work and they will continue at work until the latter part of May or June according to the season and then will receive a coat of tar and be laid down for the summer. It is an expensive process and eats up a large part of the maintenance funds provided for the work. This, in a large measure would be removed, this source of expense, by the construction of hard surface roads. This plan also providing for a bond issue for the construction of the state highways, diverts a large amount of gasoline tax to the state-aid highways, which is next of importance in our highway problem. There is there a constantly increasing demand on the part of the towns. They are, themselves, appropriating constantly increasing amounts and that necessitates constantly increasing funds for that purpose. Just when the peak will be reached is problematical, but it is assumed that within the near future it is not unlikely that the maximum will be reached.

Under the circumstances, and taking into effect the fact that by borrowing, issuing bonds, it has seemed to the committee it was possible to finance our highway program without direct tax at his time. I hope that the motion will prevail.

Mr. SPEAR of Cumberland: Mr. President, as Chairman of the Finance Committee, I am heartily in accord with what the two previous speakers have stated. I also believe that the Cumberland County delegation is absolutely behind this bond issue. I received a letter this morning from Mr. Edward Hannaford of Portland, a Democrat, a bank president, a successful

business man who deals in more wholesale produce than any similar dealer in Maine. He says.

"April 9, 1929. Hon. Arthur G. Spear, State Senator, Augusta, Maine. Dear Sir: There has been called to my attention, copy of the financial statement of the proposed structure of the highway bond issue. I am writing you personally today to ask that you vote for this bond issue and make as active a campaign as is possible among all of your colleagues in the present Legislature. Believing as I do personally, that this bond issue is the proper and at the present the only correct solution of our highway financing, I should be very glad to hear from you at your earliest convenience as to your views on this important matter. Respectfully, (Signed) E. W. Hannaford."

I hope the motion to accept the "ought to pass" report will prevail.

Mr. CARLTON of Sagadahoc: Mr. President, there is just one item I wish to call to your attention that doesn't seem to have been covered. We all have automobiles and over improved roads the repairs would not probably be half what they are at the present time, and I venture to say that if the cost of the repairs we all have to pay was devoted to the payment of the bond issue, it could be retired in comparatively few years. I hope the motion will prevail.

Mr. MURCHIE of Washington: Mr. President, if I understand correctly, this bill is the same bill that was introduced January 31st by the Senator from Lincoln, Senator Bond, Senate Document 76. I was very much interested in the statements made by the Senator from Knox, (Senator Dwinal) which if I interpret them correctly, was to this effect, that the proceeds of this bond issue should be used to complete the state highway system as it now exists, and in the opinion of the committee would be adequate to complete that system. I find on Page 2 of Senate Document 76 the same language that has been used in every bond issue up to date, "and the expenditure of said proceeds shall be equitably divided among the several counties of the State."

Now I believe the people in the eastern section of the State agree heartily with the people in the northerly and western part of the State and the highway program

should continue and the only possible way to carry the program through is by the issue of bonds, but I have understood in the past that every Highway Commission we have had, have been uncertain what the word "equitably" used in that constitutional amendment means, and I would like in some proper manner to have this sentence declared that "equitably" shall mean that the state highway system as it now exists shall be completed. We recognize in the east that there are sections of highway in the western part of the state which have been previously constructed that require new construction and we realize that those roads should have a construction, more expensive and better than is necessary for the roads in the eastern part, but we do feel that before additional roads are made a part of the state highway system, the present system should be completed. I cannot give accurate figures, but I understand it is a fact in 1913, 1914 and 1915 a highway system of 1500 miles was laid out and since that time about 600 miles has been added to it,—three miles in Aroostook, no miles in Washington County and the balance in the rest of the State. Now we are perfectly willing that those other sections shall have all the road possible but we believe our original State highways should be completed.

I should like to ask the Senator from Knox, (Senator Dwinal), the Senator from Piscataquis (Senator Leland) or the Senator from Lincoln (Senator Bond) or anybody who is authorized to speak, if it is their understanding that this fund is sufficient to build the system and that system is to be built before any additional substantial mileages are added to the State highway system.

The PRESIDENT: The Senator from Washington, Senator Murchie asks a question through the Chair and anyone may answer who desires.

Mr. DWINAL: Mr. President, I am informed that a large part of that uncompleted mileage is located in Washington County and it is my understanding that that is the first which would be completed.

Mr. MURCHIE: Mr. President, under those circumstances, I wish to add my voice to those who have spoken and say that I hope the motion will prevail.

Mr. LELAND: Mr. President, I wish to say a word in reply to the Senator from Washington, Senator Murchie. The committee has seriously considered the feasibility of determining to designate how and where this money can be expended, but I think the Senator will appreciate that it is almost entirely a matter of administration and it is difficult for the Legislature to designate the roads on which this money shall be expended and the type of road that shall be built in a given place, which in the committee's judgment made it almost necessary to be left to the Highway Department to determine. I will say, however, I believe in the new draft while the word "equitably" still remains there, it has been said "among all counties interested" instead of "the several counties," which to the technical mind of the Senator from Washington, would probably make no difference at all.

The PRESIDENT: The question is on the motion of the Senator from Knox, Senator Dwinal, that the majority report of the Ways and Bridges Committee which is "ought to pass in new draft" be accepted.

The motion prevailed.

Thereupon the resolve was given its first reading and tomorrow assigned for second reading.

The President laid before the Senate, House report from the Committee on Legal Affairs, "Ought not to pass," on "An act relating to the registration of motor vehicles," (H. D. 280), tabled on April 9th by Mr. Dwinal of Knox pending acceptance of report; and on motion by that Senator the bill was tabled.

On motion by Mr. Oakes of Cumberland, the Senate voted to take from the table, the joint order introduced by that Senator earlier in today's session referring to the next Legislature House Document Number 813, an act relating to interest charged by small loan agencies, which order, on motion by the same Senator was subsequently laid upon the table pending consideration.

Mr. OAKES of Cumberland: Mr. President, I will say that this order provides for a special committee consisting of the Senate Chairman of the Committee on Banks and