

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LEGISLATIVE RECORD

OF THE

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Legislature*

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

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during the 1973-74 winter months. Areas in Thorndike alone suffered the second highest runoff in more than ten years and the highway damage alone in Thorndike exceeded the estimate of \$19,000; in nearby Montville, in excess of \$56,000. My feeling that here is that I would say that whether this damage because of an act of God can be attributed to highway drainage raises very strong doubt.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Unity, Mr. Tozier.

Mr. TOZIER: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: Last October, both the Chairman of the other body and the Chairman of this body on Transportation was at the home of Mr. Lufkin, and I was called over also just in case I was elected and here I am. It is my understanding that we all thought that Mr. Lufkin was supposed to or should be reimbursed for the water runoff across his land. I am sure that the cows will still be milked and the hay will still be put in the barn and the waste material will still be hauled off if this bill passes or not. But I think this body should reimburse Mr. Lufkin for his cost of repairs to his land. I would hope that the Highway Department present motion to accept the minority report on this bill.

The gentleman from Corinth, Mr. Strout, mentioned that there was a natural water runoff across the property, although in my information that I found on it, there wasn't anything in the deed that required there to be a natural runoff across the property. I would hope that the Highway Department wouldn't decide that my home would be a natural runoff for the water from the highway; they may run it right through my cellar. Again I would hope you would vote no on the present motion to accept the minority report and accept the majority report.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Mexico, Mr. Fraser.

Mr. FRASER: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: There is no one in this room more chicken-hearted than I am when it comes to paying peoples damages. I would like very much to see this gentleman have his damages paid, but it was caused by a storm and not by the Highway Department. I went away one time a few years ago, and when I came back a windstorm had damaged my roof. I had to pay for it and damage done by an act of God is something that has to be accepted.

The SPEAKER: The pending question is on the motion of the gentleman from Mexico, Mr. Fraser, that the House accept the Minority "Ought not to Pass" Report. All in favor of that motion will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

A vote of the House was taken.

42 having voted in the affirmative and 51 having voted in the negative, the motion did not prevail.

Thereupon the Majority "Ought to Pass" Report was accepted. The Resolve was read once and assigned for second reading tomorrow.

The Chair laid before the House the seventh tabled and today assigned matter:

House Divided Report — Report "A" (6) "Ought to Pass" in New Draft under Same Title (H. P. 1520) (L. D. 1833) — Report "B" (6) "Ought to Pass" in New Draft under New Title "An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage to \$2.30 an Hour" (H. P. 1521) (L. D. 1834) — Committee on Labor on Bill "An Act to Increase the Minimum Wage to \$2.50 an Hour" (H. P. 148) (L. D. 173)

Tabled — April 21, by Mr. Rolde of York.
Pending — Motion of Mr. Tierney of Durham to Accept Report "A".

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Stow, Mr. Wilfong.

Mr. WILFONG: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise today in support of the motion of the gentleman from Durham, Mr. Tierney.

As you probably know, I am the sponsor of this minimum wage legislation, a piece of legislation that was reported out of the Labor Committee as "Ought to Pass". This legislature, through this bill, will be fighting for a meager subsistence wage for a large portion of Maine's work force. It will give them, if passed, \$2.30 per hour, emergency, May 5; and \$2.50 per Hour, January 1, 1976. That means on May 5 people who earn the minimum wage in this state can expect to gross \$92 for a 40-hour week and by January 1, 1976, \$100 a week. Please let me remind you that we are bargaining for subsistence wage for a large portion of Maine's working people.

We will hear today people complain about how, if passed, this bill will give us one of the highest minimum wages in the country. I wish they would show as much concern for the average manufacturing wage in this state, a wage that is ranked 45th nationally — \$92 a week or \$4,784 for a 52-week year. It is not cheap to live in Maine. According to the latest U.S. Statistical Abstract it costs for an intermediate budget for a family of four living in Portland, Maine, \$11,184. The national average is \$11,446, \$38 below Portland's. Yet the national average manufacturing wage is \$4.64 per hour. Maine's average manufacturing wage is \$3.23 per hour.

The consumer price index rose 47.4 percent in New England between 1967 and 1974, the largest increase of any region in the country. The minimum wage in 1973 was \$1.90 per hour. If we raise the minimum wage to \$2.50 per hour this very day, we would just meet inflation rates between 1973 and now.

Men and woman of the House, when we are talking about Maine's workers we are talking about some of the finest workers in the country, people that the United States Department of Labor has said are among the most highly trainable and adaptable in the United States.

We will further be told today, I am sure, that in these poor economic times to raise the minimum wage would be another step in feeding the fuel of the inflation inferno. I submit to you that when Maine's workers are on the bottom of the nation's average wages and when these same workers are among the nation's leaders in production, Maine working people do not contribute one shilling to this nation's problems with inflation.

I would like to read to you a portion of a letter that was sent to me regarding minimum wage. I will not mention the name of the author, but I will be glad to let anyone verify its authenticity later in today's session: Minimum wage by definition is that paid to the least competent and least productive worker. In most cases, these people have the least initiative and the least desire to improve their situation and at the same time they are eligible for the most benefits from every welfare program and unemployment program going today. By constantly increasing these benefits, we are driving down the incentive to work. When the law requires us to pay a

minimum wage which may be more than is economically feasible for a job, how are we able to reward a good worker over an incompetent worker on the same job? It is time we gave consideration for the man who still has pride in his work and has some consideration for his employer? Is that how this legislature intends to view the working people of this state? I would certainly hope not.

I do not subscribe to the economic theory that money must start at the top and dribble down to the working masses. If people in the low income brackets have half a chance to earn a decent income, they will spend their earnings and stimulate business. I come from a rural farm area. In recent days I have told you about the Perry boys, but there are also some Eastmen boys and Andrews boys and McGinnis boys, farm boys that I grew up with. Well, they are no longer farmers because they couldn't afford the modern farm equipment that is used in farming now-a-days, so they moved into the minimum wage arenas. They did not, however, leave their farm work habits behind; they couldn't. When it comes to work, working hard is all they know. When it comes to getting paid, minimum wage is all they know.

Men and women of the House, what we are discussing today goes far beyond the numerical figures of the minimum wage. What we are discussing today is hope, hope for the people who are at the bottom of our wage scale, hope for the children who need proper food for good mind and body development and proper medical and dental care, hope for the children who must watch both parents work five and six days a week, 51 or 52 weeks a year and who then must wonder why they are not rested enough on their days off to play with them, hope for the children who won't have much chance or rising out of the minimum wage class themselves. I am reminded of a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to a gentleman by the name of Waitman on June 24, 1826 and a portion of that letter that dealt with hope, the last great hope of this world, this country, and I quote: "All eyes are open or opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palatable truth. The mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs nor favorite few bootied and spurred ready to ride them legitimately by the Grace of God." Let's continue to keep the saddles on the backs of men and reaffirm our faith in the basic ideal that this country was founded on. Today let's vote for a fair chance in life and for the advancement of hope.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentlemen from Kennebunk, Mr. McMahon.

Mr. McMAHON: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I would like to warn those members who favor a \$2.30 minimum wage that if they vote against the pending motion and subsequently vote for Report B, they will probably find themselves listed as having voted against the minimum wage increase altogether when the AFL-CIO sends out its political mailing next election. In spite of that, however, I intend to support the \$2.30 minimum wage, because I feel that it strikes a balance between the needs of our working people and the ability of many of our small Maine businesses to survive in these times of economic distress.

What good will it be to Maine's working people if our action today forces some

small industries to go out of business entirely?

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Falmouth, Mr. Snow.

Mr. SNOW: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise in the hope that you will not accept Report A. I would like to call your attention to a few things which I think make it legislation which is less in the interest of the low paid people of the state and not more in their interest.

In the first place, it carries an emergency preamble. This means that many summer businesses, which have already, if you will, arranged for their tuition, set their charges, will be in a difficult position. They will have to pay higher wages.

I would also note that only three states have higher minimum wages than Maine. We are at the end of the line. We wish to attract industry, and while we would like to have industry which will pay more than the minimum wage, the mere fact that we have this kind of legislation, which most other states do not have, does not indicate the kind of business climate we would like to have which, in the opinion of many, would do far more to raise the standards, the wage standards in the state.

Finally, I am concerned and I believe I share the concern of the gentleman from Kennebunk, Mr. McMahon, that if we increase the minimum wage some will benefit from it, but an equal number may be unemployed or become unemployed. In these times of uncertainty and high unemployment, I don't think I want to take the chance of raising the minimum wage to a level higher than that of the federal, higher than that of most of the states in the Union and take a chance of depriving some people of jobs they need.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bangor, Mr. Kelleher.

Mr. KELLEHER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to pose a question through the Chair if I may to Mr. McMahon. The argument that he has presented here today is the same that I heard in 1969 when I first came to this legislature, about the number of businesses that would be driven out and I would just like to know how many businesses is he talking about and did any of them really fail and leave the state when we had the last minimum wage increases? What are you talking about in numbers?

The SPEAKER: The gentleman from Bangor, Mr. Kelleher, poses a question through the Chair to the gentleman from Kennebunk, Mr. McMahon, who may answer if he so desires.

The Chair recognizes that gentleman.

Mr. McMAHON: Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman from Bangor, knows full well that I am not prepared to give him numbers. I am reflecting the opinions of quite a few small business owners in my area who have contacted me. I would also remind the good gentleman that during the 106th Legislature, I suspect he and I were on the same side when it came to most labor issues. I think the economic situation that we find ourselves in at the moment dictates more prudence on our part and on the part of the majority party at this time.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Flanagan.

Mr. FLANAGAN: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise in support of Report A, L.D. 1833. It is a redraft of the original L.D. 173. This change was made to facilitate the issuance of a caucus desire of our colleagues from across the aisle. The new draft calls for a

minimum wage increase that was scheduled for January 1, 1976 to \$2.30 an hour to be moved up to the first part of May and the added increase of \$2.50 on January 1, 1976.

The question asked, are we ready for this action? A, response is evident. The action is long overdue. Our state is not only plagued with unemployment but also suffering from a serious case of underemployment that is producing a most serious problem. The facts are absolute. Let's look at the records.

Our civilian labor force in Maine, approximately 430,000 workers. The unemployment figures show that the current unemployment is 10.6 percent, amounting to 45,600 people. Disguised unemployment, unemployment individuals who have ceased looking for work, knowing how impossible it is to get it, runs one percent, or a 4,300 number of people. The total of unemployment figures show 11.6 percent in 49,900 people.

The underemployment figures are worth noting. The involuntary part-time workers amount to 3.7 percent, or 15,900 people. The full-time workers with incomes less than \$5,000 a year amount to 15 percent or 64,500 workers. The total underemployment figures are 18.7 percent and 80,400 people. The grand total of unemployed and underemployed people in the State of Maine here today has reached a 30.3 percent, or 129,300 people.

Now, statistics are far from exciting but for excitement, let's analyze them. How does it strike you, Mr. Speaker and ladies and gentlemen of this House, to understand that over 30 percent of our state total labor force is eeking out an existence on wages far below the 1973 poverty base of \$5,600 a year for a family of four? Would it be encouraging to realize that passage of this bill will not completely solve this situation, it will only help to bring them within \$400 of the poverty line.

Hopefully, all of us in this House today will face the reality of this problem and make it our number one priority as it is throughout these United States. We will make it a priority that we shall be eager and willing to move in a most positive direction to ease the situation for the unfortunate, unemployed, and under-employed in our State of Maine and that you shall see fit to offer the leadership your constituents expect, and don't forget many of the people earning below the poverty line are your constituents. Think of the 129,000 members of the work force in this state with incomes of less than \$5,000 a year. Now, you would think of the nearly one third of our State of Maine's labor force that has serious employment problems. What kind of leadership would give anything less than a number one priority to tackle such a tremendous task? You, the legislators, are the last straw for these people. There are no other avenues left for them. I urge all of you to give your utmost consideration and support the passage of this bill.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Enfield, Mr. Dudley.

Mr. DUDLEY: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I am for minimum wages but I think it should be done on a national level and when it isn't done on a national level, in the area from which I come, we suffer, we have more unemployment. They have less people employed and these are the people I would like to try and help. I would like to have more employment and more of these

people working and they would like to have a job.

In answer to the gentleman's question from Bangor, Mr. Kelleher, I can't give him statistics, but I remember telling this House, when we raised it the last time, that I knew for sure five marginal industries in my area that I represented at that time would be out of business, and turned out to be ten. One of them was a very large cedar producing outfit where it made cedar fencing and cedar stakes, but this put them in a position where they couldn't compete with their competitors delivering this same merchandise in New York, Connecticut and where it had to be delivered, so they are no longer in business.

If this is the case, I don't think this is good legislation. I want more jobs, more people working. Another thing, when you raise the services, I am in the garage business, I pay more than that and I think most garages do, I understand from the Speaker that in his area they may get some from across the border cheaper. But let me tell you, if it involves services, it don't bother the service man because he raises whatever he's doing accordingly, so where this hurts is the people who are unemployed. In other words, if the barber has to go up or anybody who does these services, they have to add it on so the man that is unemployed with no checks at all is the one that really gets hurt. He is really the one I want to help.

I am for minimum wages and I hope we can have some, but on a national level so that all states will participate and we can't lose industry to other states, even it is marginal. Some of these people that I represent would rather have a job where they can earn an honest living than be on welfare. This tends to work the opposite way in my area and as well as I would like to see more people get more money, I still think the right way to do it is on a national level, not for the little State of Maine to try to wag its tail and lead the national government. We end up with more people unemployed and the services costing more for those people who have to buy the services that have no pay at all.

I want more people working and more jobs and less welfare, and this is a poor way to get it.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Hallowell, Mr. Stubbs.

Mr. STUBBS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise in support of Committee Report A. I, for one, don't want to wait on Washington any more. I have seen enough of that mess down there.

I submit that the present minimum wage is not a living wage. The people who are working at the present minimum wage, they have two places to go. In order to live, they are to pick up their pay checks at the factory and then they have to go down to City Hall to pick up another welfare check. I know, I have seen them pouring into City Hall every Thursday down there, which is welfare day.

Raise the minimum wage, less welfare money will be spent, cut down on the state's cost to welfare, the city's cost to welfare, and we will all be better off, plus, it will give the workers a sense of dignity.

Unfortunately, there is some opposition from some marginal industries. However, I question whether or not these marginal industries would stay in business very long anyway and also a very small minority, and we all know of some, of employees who have what we call a Scrooge mentality. I would like to give you an example. A very

good friend of mine retired after 40 years of work in the shoe factory and I saw him the day after he retired and he had a check for \$40. I asked him and he said they paid him one dollar for every year that he worked there; this was his bonus when he retired — one dollar. Now, I submit that that is a classic example of an employer who has a Scrooge mentality. That is the type of employer who will always pay the minimum wage, whether it is 25 cents or 50 cents or 10 cents. Therefore, I think it is mandatory that we raise the minimum wage so that these people can have a little sense of dignity and live with themselves and we can live with ourselves.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Cumberland, Mr. Garsoe.

Mr. GARSOE: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: When I was younger, I used to get my spring tonic of sulphur and molasses. The last two years I have really refreshed myself and rid myself of all the ill humors of a long winter by railing to this body against the minimum wage increases that have taken place since I have been here.

Who could argue with the proposals that have just been put forth here as to the effect on human beings of their income? But I would ask this body to examine what effect has been brought about in this situation by the actions taken on the floor of this House over the past three or four years with regard to minimum wage? I would like to point out to you and I think before I do I would mention that the gentleman from Stow, Mr. Wilfong, and the gentleman from Portland, my good friend Mr. Flanagan, have really made my argument for me, because they have shown you the present economic situation of the workers in this state. This, in spite of the fact that in October of 1971 we moved ahead of the federal minimum wage by 20 cents an hour and next year it went 30 cents an hour, and I submit that we should start asking ourselves what the effect of this has been if we still find ourselves 41st in per capita income? I would only argue, human consideration completely aside — is this a proper vehicle to bring about the prosperity of the State of Maine? I submit it isn't. I submit it is almost a game of political one-upmanship, to run to the front to see who can slap in the biggest increase and I submit that in talking in terms of 30, 40, and 50 cents an hour is selling the people short. If this will work, let's go to \$4 an hour and really wipe out poverty. I know that doesn't make any sense but I don't think this makes any sense either.

In order to be able to express myself on the board, I move for the indefinite postponement of this bill, its reports, and all accompanying papers.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise in opposition to the motion, although I reluctantly support the Committee Report A. Being sponsor of the bill to raise the minimum wage to \$3 an hour, I am really disappointed with the three reports that the committee came out with, but I would like to see \$2.50 passed if we can't get anything higher than that.

I would like to deal briefly with some of the arguments that have been posed by opponents of raising the minimum wage and I think some of those same people would, if they had their way, like to keep the minimum wage where it is and not

even raise it to \$2.30 an hour. Be that as it may, I would like to point out a few things.

In the Democratic Platform that was adopted last year, it called for a minimum wage of \$2.75. I think that all of you who believe that that platform means anything would then follow and vote against the motion to indefinitely postpone and vote to raise the minimum wage to \$2.50.

The gentleman from Kennebunk, Mr. McMahon, would have us believe that prudence and the fact that \$2.30 an hour would meet the needs of the people, is reason enough for killing legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$2.50 an hour, but I would just like to point out that I don't think any of us here, were we to have the choice, would be willing to work for \$92 a week or a \$100 a week January of next year. I would like to pose that question again to the Representative from Cumberland, Mr. Garsoe. I posed that question last year in the debate on this bill and he didn't respond to it publicly.

I would also like to point out the fact that a lot of us in the legislature feel that we are under paid, but we take home a paycheck, a takehome paycheck, more than people who would receive the minimum wage as proposed by \$2.30 and then \$2.50 an hour would gross. We would take home more than people who would be receiving the minimum wage would gross.

The argument has been made, it was made at the hearing and it has been made by small businesses and it has been made on the floor of the House that by raising the minimum wage in any significant degree would force small businesses out of business. In reviewing and preparing testimony that I gave at the hearing on the \$3 minimum wage, I came across several studies that have been done by Congress, by both Republican and the Democratic Parties and those studies all show that there has been no significant impact on businesses by raising the minimum wage, but I would submit that what Representative Dudley told us this morning that 10 businesses had been forced to close down and if what other people purport that large number of businesses close down, that this legislature this morning has shown its willingness to subsidize business, to provide exemptions for business, so if businesses are going to be forced to close down because of an increase in the minimum wage, why don't one of the representatives here, who feel that business should not be forced out, introduce a bill to provide an exemption or a subsidy.

One other point I would like to make in closing, is the strategy of the Republican Party in regard to the issue of the minimum wage. The way that it has been explained to me is that \$2.50, Mr. Wilfong's bill, will probably pass in this body, but that the Republican Party in caucus has voted to accept no more than \$2.30 an hour and they will stick to that position in the Senate, and those of us who would like to see the minimum wage raised to \$2.50 or higher will be forced either to accept \$2.30 or no minimum wage at all. That is the strategy of the Republican Party that Mr. McMahon would say is prudent and meets the needs of the people of Maine.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Cumberland, Mr. Garsoe.

Mr. GARSOE: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: Very briefly, in response to the question of my good friend, the gentleman from Portland, if he is offering me a job at the minimum wage, I

will accept it. I wouldn't have last year but things have changed.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Westbrook, Mr. Laffin.

Mr. LAFFIN: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I had a three-page speech ready here this morning on the minimum wage, but after sitting here and listening, I can make a speech up without even reading it.

First of all, the Republican Party has been accused by my good friend from Portland of something I don't know anything about. I am a Republican and I do not agree with his statement, but I think the most important thing that we are faced with here this morning is the minimum wage, the minimum wage of the people who work for a living. This morning I accused the Democrats of stealing my platform. If they had \$2.75 in their platform, they must have gotten it from me because I had \$2.75 in my own platform back home in Westbrook. So if they want to talk who is stealing what from somebody this morning, I accuse them of that.

It is not the minimum wage that is going to hurt the small business man, it is laws made by this legislature, such as controlling liquor, bottle control and those things, that is what hurts the small businesses, not the minimum wage. The working people of this state are entitled to a decent wage and for anyone to say that they are not, they are not fooling anybody but themselves.

Maybe, I had better go back to my speech, at least it was quiet. Mrs. Tarr told me, she said don't get up and holler at me or I will cry, so I am not going to.

I think this is a very serious problem, and if they say Maine will be the highest in the nation, I say it is a great thing. I think it is wonderful. The minimum wage that exists in some of the southern states that I have seen, where women working 10 and 11 hours a day for a minimum wage, had not the federal government instituted that minimum wage, they would probably be working for a \$1.50 an hour. I don't usually support the federal government telling local people what to do, but in this case they were for the State of South Carolina.

The first act of the minimum wage that started in this country was in 1938 for 25 cents an hour so that the people of this land, the working people, would be guaranteed a fair income. Seven years later, they did raise it to 40 cents an hour. The minimum wage is a very part of our lives today. It guarantees equal rights for women; it guarantees equal rights for all working people.

It is hard to conceive that any person in this legislature would not want to have a minimum wage raised from what we presently have it to \$2.50 an hour, and when people say that they are opposed to the \$2.50 an hour, I certainly was opposed to it too. I wanted \$2.75 and I couldn't get it, but I certainly will not settle for anything else and I don't care what they say back home. It has been brought up here this morning, if you don't vote for a certain thing, they say the papers will say you voted against the minimum wage. Well, newspapers say things about me that is not true anyway, so that doesn't bother me. I do feel that the most important thing to be considered here today is to give the working people — raise that minimum wage and keep it going up and I agree wholeheartedly with my good friend from Cumberland that if it was \$4 an hour, I would certainly vote for it.

The unemployment line is a big thing in this state and unemployment figures, statistics of which I don't go too much for, but they are facts, that people can make more money in the unemployment line than they can working for a good days pay 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week. By the time the taxes are taken out, they are better off to take their \$68 a week, and this is encouraging unemployment.

I have a lot of things in my 3-page speech that I want to bring up, but I am sure I will be better thought of if I didn't keep you here until three o'clock talking about this, but I do seriously, very seriously, urge you to support the \$2.50 an hour.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from York, Mr. Rolde.

Mr. ROLDE: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I rise to oppose the gentleman from Cumberland, Mr. Garsoe, to indefinitely postpone this bill. I had also planned to rise to support Report A from the Labor Committee. Like you, I receive a lot of communications on this subject of minimum wage and I have heard many arguments pro and con. Being of a historical turn of mind I began to wonder what people had said about this type of legislation in the past, so I had some research done on the debates in the House on this subject in the past and I have some excerpts to read to you.

The first occurred in 1955 when a minimum wage bill was introduced for the first time in the Maine Legislature. One objector in speaking of this said, and I quote, "This bill places restrictions upon every business man and woman in our state. It places a restriction upon the students of our state and it places restrictions upon the mother and the grandmother in the homes of our state because this bill forbids the mother and the grandmother from knitting a pair of socks in their home and selling them to their neighbor or to their son-in-law to be worn around the farm and in the forest, because in knitting these socks at 75 cents an hour the price of those socks would be more than double what you could buy those socks for in the market." That argument apparently had some weight because the bill was defeated in 1955.

In 1957, the bill was again introduced, finally successful, and here is what one gentleman said, "Here in the State of Maine we are a vacation state and yet if we pass legislation like this it would do nothing but hurt our hotels and restaurants and other phases of our economy." That was in 1957. Another gentleman in 1957 said, "Labor is in the nature of a commodity and is only worth what it can produce. To assume that every laborer, no matter how unskilled, lazy, or inefficient he may be is worth 75 cents an hour is to think very superficially about the economic value of such labor." Another gentleman, also in 1957 said, "For instance New Hampshire has a minimum wage law but their minimum is 60 cents. "Why do we have to have 75 cents in Maine to start with? We should creep before we walk." Perhaps these ancient arguments set this matter in perspective, perhaps not in some minds, but everything is relative and where our predecessors were aghast at the idea of 75 cents an hour, we find ourselves arguing today over \$2.50 an hour or \$2.30 an hour and obviously the question now, at it was then, is the justice of the matter in the needs of our working people.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Talbot.

Mr. TALBOT: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and

Gentlemen of the House: I sincerely hope you go against the motion of indefinite postponement. For many, many years I worked under the so-called auspices of the minimum wage and it is pure H-e-l-l.

Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, I have four daughters who don't eat that much and we spend close to \$70 and \$75 a week for groceries — that is just groceries. I think my wife does a very excellent job at shopping. We don't eat steak every day, we don't eat beans every day, but she goes to every sale that she can get to. I think she does a reasonable job and she spends more than what people are making today on the minimum wage.

Minimum wage isn't a dirty word; it is not a dirty word. I think we can all be proud of a minimum wage if it is going to be just. I think this one is just. I think this one is needed. This bill that we have in front of us now is probably one of the few bills dealing with money that goes directly to the people involved. It doesn't get shaved off at the top and it doesn't get shaved off at the bottom, it goes directly to the people involved. Those people are the working people of this state.

Without the minimum wage and with the minimum wage they are on now, let's just take a family and find out what happens to them. First of all, they must let their insurances lapse because there is no way that they can afford to keep them. Their hospitalization lapses because there is no way to keep them. You will find that it deteriorates the entire family because they can not keep up with the rising costs of today; it is impossible, they can't pay their bills. Their bills must go. If I were making the minimum wage, I wouldn't be standing in front of you today because I couldn't do it it is impossible. Like, the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Connolly said, he takes home more in expenses than the people working a 40-hour week do making minimum wage — now think about that. Here we sit in our nice comfortable chairs and nice comfortable seats able to do something directly to benefit the people of this state. I don't see how we can argue that point and say to ourselves it is not fair, we can't do that. Businesses aren't going to close up; they are not going to shut down. They are not going to shut down and go out of business. I think it is incumbent upon us as a legislature to at least give the people of the state, the working people of this state, the benefit of being able to survive and that is all they are able to do is be able to survive, because on \$92 a week they are still only making \$4,000, or a little over \$4,000 a year. That is incredible when you think about it; it is incredible when you think of the working people of this state bear the brunt of the inflationary prices of today, they bear the brunt. They do the work, and they pay the taxes. Working people pay more taxes than any other majority in this country and we sit and we sit in judgment of whether we are going to give them an extra raise insofar as them being able to survive. I don't think it is something we ought to think about, I think it is something we ought to do.

I can remember when I was making the minimum wage and I worked on many a job for many years working for just a minimum wage, and every time that year went by or every time the legislature had a chance to vote on the minimum wage, we used to sit and cringe at what would happen, because we would get another nickel. It wasn't more than a nickel, when every minimum wage ever came up it

wasn't more than a nickel or a dime at the most, and that doesn't really do to much.

I sincerely hope that we vote against the indefinite postponement of this bill so that we can pass this bill so it can directly benefit the people that are able to put us here, the people that are depending on us and the people that work in this state.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Bridgton, Mrs. Tarr.

Mrs. TARR: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I don't think the minimum wage is a dirty word. I think our working people deserve a fair wage, but when you look at the economy today, when you look at the unemployment figures that I think were 12.1 per cent, 52,000 people in the State of Maine that are unemployed, when you look at the small businesses that have struggled through the winter, and I mean struggled, I have talked to the small businesses throughout my area and I know we are not unique in this and I know that they have struggled. They have struggled to keep their doors open. There is not that much business around. They are taking money from savings accounts to pay their bills. I have heard people tell me businesses in my own area that for the first time they are having difficulty trying to keep their bills paid.

I certainly don't think the minimum wage is a dirty word, and I just would like to see you indefinitely postpone the Committee Report A, because the Committee Report B would raise the minimum wage and go to \$2.30 in the fall. This would give our businesses a chance to get on their feet, to have a good summer, some of them are just now beginning to pick up orders for the summer. I ask you please to indefinitely postpone Committee Report A. I just don't think businesses are going to be able to handle it and I am very sincere in this. I have worked all my life. I don't want people working for no wages at all, but you have got to realize that somebody is going to pay those wages and if your business is not good enough and can't withstand it, you just aren't going to hire anybody. If you hire somebody at \$2.50 for a minimum wage, what about the guy that has been working there for four or five months at \$2.50? Now he is going to want to get a raise. I can see problems with it and believe me, I am not against the working people, I have worked, I know many and many of you have, but I still think that \$2.50 the small businesses can't stand. I really and truly believe that or I wouldn't be standing here today. I want to thank Mr. Laffin for not yelling at me but I just might cry anyway.

I would like to, on the report that I got from the Department of Transportation that if the minimum wage goes to \$2.50, there will be no effect of this at \$2.30, but the minimum wage at \$2.50 an hour, this is on the general highway fund, it would have an impact on the amount to increase the cost to the general highway fund in the amount of \$77,000 in the fiscal year of 1975-76 and \$75,516 in the fiscal year of 1976-77, and there is a little line down here that says funds for this purpose have not been included in the Governor's Budget. This is going to have quite an impact; it can't help but have an impact. I ask you to support the motion for indefinite postponement of Committee Report A and accept Committee Report B.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nobleboro, Mr. Palmer.

Mr. PALMER: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and

Gentlemen of the House: I know the hour is late and I will be very brief. I do feel as though I should stand and say just a word or two regarding the statements made by the gentleman from Portland, Mr. Connolly. I think that I have been in attendance at all of the Republican caucuses we have had this year and at no time, truthfully, have I known of any arrangements signed in blood that have been made in the Republican Party such as he referred to this morning. As a matter of fact, I think the opposite may very well be true, because after you listen to the inspirational speeches of the gentleman from Westbrook, Mr. Tuffy Laffin, and the second-hand dealer from Hallowell, Mr. Stubbs, I think you have some idea that there is a little difference of opinion, in the Republican Party as to just exactly what the minimum wage should be.

I think that the point we are missing here this morning is that actually, regardless of whether you vote for one bill, one report or the other, you are voting for an increase in the minimum wage. We seem to be starting off with \$2.30 here. The minimum wage today is \$2.10 and each of these reports, in one way or another, advances that date upward in the year 1975. I would say, that I feel that it is our responsibility in this country and I think perhaps this is the least we can do, to move it up, advance it, especially in these times of economic uncertainty.

Certainly, I do not agree that \$2.50 is the right hourly wage for a minimum. I don't believe that we in the State of Maine or any other state can take this lead. It seems to me that to follow the federal guidelines and even if we go to \$2.30 earlier, we will be advancing ourselves beyond the federals. I believe the better part of judgment would be for us as a state to follow the federal, but at this time of economic uncertainty to give a little bit of a break to those who really do need it.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bangor, Mr. Kelleher.

Mr. KELLEHER: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: The arguments that we have heard here this morning against the increase in the minimum wage to \$2.50, as I have said before, I have heard over the last six or seven years on any additional rate increase for the minimum wage.

I might like to tell you a little story that happened to me in Bangor a few weeks ago when I had the opportunity to go to a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, which is made up of a broad spectrum of individuals in my community and at that meeting there wasn't one individual, excuse me, there was just one individual who spoke for the minimum wage increase and his arguments were this, he said that he believed that the more money that we put into the workingman's pocket would be returned to him in a business that he runs on Main Street. His arguments also were that businesses own workers are its own best customers and that is very true.

The \$2.50 minimum wage that is being asked here by the majority of the Committee on Labor to take effect in January is not unreasonable. In fact, in my opinion, I would have like to had them come back with a \$2.75 minimum wage.

I had a retailer in Bangor call me the other day and he was put out to no end because he had heard from his good Republican friends, after the statement that was released by Mr. Palmer and by Mr. Sewall and by Mr. Speers, on bringing the \$2.30 minimum wage from January

back until May. His fine friends in Bangor said it wasn't the Republicans that wanted to do it, it was the Democratic Party and he said, "Ed, I can't understand how you can even think about it, going to \$2.30, can you imagine it?" \$2.30, and I was trying to answer this fine gentleman and he was going like a machine gun, you know, you just mention the fact that you were even considering an increase in the minimum wage and he wouldn't let you get — I had to wait until he came up for air before I could give him my reasons. And I said to him, how can you charge me \$200 for a suit or a \$175 for a topcoat, what right have you got to charge me that? Then you stay on the telephone and you are telling me that I shouldn't be considering an increase in the minimum wage. Perhaps the United States Congress would be better off if a lot more of us were sitting down there or people like us across this nation to help the workers of this country. Can you imagine a small amount of money, \$2.30 for a minimum wage for the people of Maine? Nothing wrong with that. You know there are some people in this House and even in the national Congress for a minimum wage, and the lower the minimum the better it suits them.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bangor, Mr. McKernan.

Mr. MCKERNAN: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: To be brief, I just want to respond to my good friend from Bangor, Mr. Kelleher. He listed the names who were on the press release put out by the members of the Republican leadership and mine was not on there, but I certainly concurred in their position and I intend to vote against the indefinite postponement today; however, only so that I can offer the amendment which we proposed in our press release to increase as an emergency the minimum wage to \$2.30 but not to go to \$2.50 in January. We believe that we should wait and come back in January and see what the economic picture is. I don't want to debate that amendment today, however.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Orono, Mr. Davies.

Mr. DAVIES: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I am a freshman in this body and I usually stay in my seat and listen to what my elders and more experienced people have to say on issues, but I think today I can add a little bit to help us make a decision on this matter. A lot of the bills that come before us are very confusing. I think perhaps the one on the excise tax for railroads emphasized that to me more than any other. So it is nice to see a bill that comes along that is clear cut. It is in dollars and cents. We don't have to look around for hidden figures or hidden intent. I think it is very clear.

I would like to talk a little bit about the impact on human beings of the minimum wage. The minimum wage is at \$2.10 an hour, \$84 a week gross, take home, approximately \$68 a week and that is not an awful lot of money. The average family in the State of Maine is comprised of 3.57 people. I turn to some figures that have been prepared by the Maine Department of Manpower Affairs. It talks about annual budgets for a family of four in Portland, Maine. I cut these figures down a little bit to provide for the 3.57 family size and I was astounded by the numbers that I saw before me. For a person who is under the minimum wage, he is making about \$360 a month. The outlay in expenses in this sheet would be well in excess of that, close to

\$690, so I cut some figures out of it, cut out things like medical insurance, things like insurance on your car, things that most of us would consider necessary but in the eyes of a person who doesn't have very much money, his cutting would be much more severe than ours would be. For a family of 3½ I figure \$120 a month for food, \$100 a month for housing, \$30 for transportation going from the store to work, etc.; \$25.00 a month for clothing, \$30 a month for medical care, health insurance, things like that, \$25 for incidental family expenditures, \$40 a month for Social Security and disability payments, and \$40 a month for personal income taxes and it works out to \$410 a month for a person who is making \$361.20 a month gross. That is \$48 a month that that person is spending but he doesn't have and where does that come from?

I think the point that Mr. Stubbs made earlier makes it eminently clear. He goes on welfare. How many people in this state are working people but also welfare recipients? We frequently have a dichotomy pointed out to us, the conflict between the working man and the welfare recipient. In this case, there are probably several thousand people who are both, who work 40 hours a week and yet find it totally impossible to pay their absolutely minimal expenses without turning to the town or the county or the state or the federal government for some form of assistance.

I worked for a year in your county as the Assistant Director of Surplus Food Program down there and I saw a lot of these people who were ashamed to come up to our bus to pick up their surplus foods and the reason why were because they were proud that they were working men but they had been forced into a situation where they had absolutely no choice whatsoever. That bothered me a lot.

I want to look at another point too, a decent living wage should be the reasonable expectation that each person has of each and every business and industry that employs people in the State of Maine. When a business does not pay a living wage, it is putting a share of its cost of operations off on the taxpayers, you and me. He gets a worker, pays a portion of his necessary expenses and lets the state pick up the rest of the tab. That bothers me greatly. These people don't want to be on welfare but their employers, by not paying them more than the minimum wage has forced them into that situation.

Now, if we are going to go passing out benefits to railroads, maybe, we should pass out a few benefits to the working people who keep those railroads operating and keep the other industries in the state operating.

I think the request in Committee Report A, for a \$2.50 minimum wage, is less than minimum of what they really deserve but I think it is a reasonable compromise. I, too, would like to see it go to \$2.75 or \$3 an hour, but I think that \$2.50 is a good step to begin to go in that direction. That will bring us close to a persons basic expenses. I think that is reasonable for us to grant them.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bangor, Mr. Ingegneri.

Mr. INGEGNERI: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House: A thought just came to me. I happen to have here the tax reduction bill of 1975 for the federal government. One of the prime purposes of this bill was to pump money back to the great mass of consumers, because when the money got to the consumers, then it

would get back to business and the recession would be ended or considerably lessened.

You talk about where is the rebate, where the tax credit should go, and they have picked the poverty level. Now just listen to this. A family of four, the poverty level is \$5,460 a year. On top of that, you must understand that there has to be a 5.85 social security deduction. Here is a person with a family of four who has to provide for his old age by reducing his poverty level income by an addition \$400, so when he is 65 years old he may have something. Is there any wonder that the federal government has to consider some method to immediately get money back to people like that? These are the people who would be assisted by a very modest minimum wage of \$2.50 per hour.

I have also heard some of the bleeding around Bangor, and I have heard of extreme cases where you take a teenager in and now that teenager would be unemployed because you have to go to \$2.50 an hour. I submit that there are other solutions to that particular problem. The solution could be less hours, and any business that cannot adjust itself so it can pay a decent subsequent wage ought to be not in business. I think that this particular document is a great argument for a minimum wage of \$2.50 per hour.

Mr. Tierney of Durham requested a roll call vote.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been requested. For the Chair to order a roll call, it must have the expressed desire of one fifth of the members present and voting. All those desiring a roll call vote will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

A vote of the House was taken, and more than one fifth of the members present having expressed a desire for a roll call, a roll call was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The pending question is on the motion of the gentleman from Cumberland, Mr. Garsoe, that this Bill and all accompanying papers be indefinitely postponed. All in favor of that motion will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL

YEA — Garsoe, Rollins, Torrey.

NAY — Albert, Ault, Bachrach, Bagley, Bennett, Berry, G. W.; Berry, P. P.; Berube, Birt, Blodgett, Boudreau, Bowie, Burns, Bustin, Byers, Call, Carey, Carpenter, Carroll, Carter, Chonko, Churchill, Connors, Connolly, Cooney, Cote, Cox, Curran, P.; Curran, R.; Dam, Davies, DeVane, Doak, Drigotas, Durgin, Dyer, Farley, Farnham, Faucher, Fenlason, Finemore, Flanagan, Fraser, Gauthier, Goodwin, H.; Goodwin, K.; Gould, Gray, Greenlaw, Hall, Henderson, Hennessey, Hewes, Higgins, Hinds, Hobbins, Hughes, Hunter, Hutchings, Immonen, Ingegneri, Jackson, Jacques, Jalbert, Jensen, Joyce, Kany, Kauffman, Kelleher, Kelley, Kennedy, Laffin, LaPointe, Laverty, LeBlanc, Leonard, Lewin, Lewis, Littlefield, Lunt, Lynch, MacEachern, MacLeod, Mahany, Martin, A.; Martin, R.; Maxwell, McBreairty, McKernan, McMahon, Mills, Miskavage, Mitchell, Morin, Morton, Mulkern, Nadeau, Najarian, Norris, Palmer, Peakes, Pelosi, Perkins, T.; Peterson, P.; Pierce, Post, Powell, Quinn, Raymond, Rolde, Saunders, Shute, Silverman, Smith, Snow, Snowe, Spencer, Sprowl, Strout, Stubbs, Susi, Talbot, Tarr, Teague, Theriault, Tierney, Tozier, Truman, Twitchell, Usher, Walker, Webber, Wilfong, Winship, The Speaker.

ABSENT — Clark, Curtis, Dow, Dudley,

Lizotte, Lovell, Mackel, Perkins, S. Peterson, T.; Rideout, Tyndale, Wagner.

Yes, 3; No, 135; Absent, 12.

The SPEAKER: Three having voted in the affirmative and one hundred thirty-five in the negative, with twelve being absent, the motion does not prevail.

The pending question now before the House is on the motion of the gentleman from Durham, Mr. Tierney, that the House accept Report A.

Mr. Tierney of Durham requested a roll call vote.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been requested. For the Chair to order a roll call, it must have the expressed desire of one fifth of the members present and voting. All those desiring a roll call vote will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

A vote of the House was taken, and more than one fifth of the members present having expressed a desire for a roll call, a roll call was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The pending question is on the motion of the gentleman from Durham, Mr. Tierney, that the House accept Report A, "Ought to pass," on L. D. 173. All in favor of that motion will vote yes; those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL

YEA — Albert, Bachrach, Bennett, Berry, G. W.; Berry, P. P.; Berube, Blodgett, Boudreau, Bustin, Carey, Carpenter, Carroll, Carter, Chonko, Churchill, Connolly, Cooney, Cote, Cox, Curran, P.; Curran, R.; Dam, Davies, Drigotas, Durgin, Farley, Faucher, Fenlason, Finemore, Flanagan, Fraser, Gauthier, Goodwin, H.; Goodwin, K.; Greenlaw, Hall, Henderson, Hennessey, Higgins, Hobbins, Hughes, Ingegneri, Jacques, Jalbert, Jensen, Joyce, Kany, Kauffman, Kelleher, Kennedy, Laffin, LaPointe, LeBlanc, Leonard, Lewis, Littlefield, Lunt, MacEachern, Mahany, Martin, A.; Martin, R.; Maxwell, McBreairty, McKernan, Mills, Mitchell, Morin, Mulkern, Nadeau, Najarian, Peakes, Pelosi, Peterson, P.; Pierce, Post, Powell, Quinn, Raymond, Rolde, Saunders, Shute, Silverman, Smith, Spencer, Strout, Stubbs, Talbot, Theriault, Tierney, Truman, Twitchell, Usher, Walker, Wilfong, Winship, The Speaker.

NAY — Ault, Bagley, Birt, Bowie, Burns, Byers, Call, Connors, DeVane, Doak, Dyer, Farnham, Garsoe, Gould, Gray, Hewes, Hinds, Hunter, Hutchings, Immonen, Jackson, Kelley, Laverty, Lewin, Lynch, Mackel, MacLeod, McMahon, Miskavage, Morton, Norris, Palmer, Perkins, T.; Rollins, Snow, Snowe, Sprowl, Susi, Tarr, Teague, Torrey, Tozier, Webber.

ABSENT — Clark, Curtis, Dow, Dudley, Lizotte, Lovell, Perkins, S.; Peterson, T.; Rideout, Tyndale, Wagner.

Yes, 96; No, 43; Absent, 11.

The SPEAKER: Ninety-six having voted in the affirmative and forty-three in the negative, with eleven being absent, the motion does prevail.

Thereupon, the New Draft was read once and assigned for second reading tomorrow.

(Off Record Remarks)

On motion of Mr. Usher of Westbrook,
Adjourned until nine o'clock tomorrow morning.