

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record

OF THE

Seventy-Seventh Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1915

amendable form on its passage to be engrossed, and the Senate, in its wisdom, it may be called, voted "ought not to pass" on these different amendments.

I believe it has had all the consideration it ought to have at this time. I believe the President himself has stated the four great measures of this session to be the Massachusetts Ballot, Woman's Suffrage, the Workmen's Compensation Act, and the Fifty-four Hour Law. Of course if the Senate wishes to at this time, I have no objection, but I believe the bill has had consideration enough, and I think the committee on labor feels that way with me.

Mr. EMERY: I can't see that the Senator from Cumberland has assigned any good reason as to why we should not consider these amendments. The amendments which I have here have not been offered by anybody.

We don't question the honest contentions of that committee, but we have a perfect right to question their wisdom, perhaps, and I think it would be proper, I am perfectly willing to state the nature of these amendments before we take any action at all.

The PRESIDENT: It would be perfectly proper, I think, Senator Emery.

Mr. EMERY: Amendment "B" simply calls for striking out the word "seven" in the fourth line and inserting in the place thereof the words "six-thirty."

Now I would say that this is being offered at the suggestion of the employees themselves. The representatives asked me to present this, or rather to so amend that bill, so that they might be allowed to think and act for themselves in this matter, that it should be left to them to say whether they should go to work at 6.30 or seven o'clock.

Now it seems to me that is a fair thing. Here are the people we are trying to help, and I feel that we are just trespassing on their rights a little when we say to them "You shan't go to work before seven o'clock in the morning." You don't want it said to you; I don't want it said to me. Why should we say that to them? They have asked this; I haven't. It doesn't make one cent's difference to the employer whether they go to work at 6.30 or seven. They expect nine hours' work in one day.

Now it is argued by them, and I think their ground is well taken, that they would rather get in a little earlier while it is cool in order that they might get out a little earlier in the afternoon. We all know that the hottest part of the day is along in the afternoon, three or four o'clock, and if they can get out at five o'clock and go home it gives them an hour to change their clothes and rest a little before they have their supper, and enjoy the long evenings in the summer. In the winter time the days are short; it is dark at 6.30, and they would much rather go to work at seven o'clock, and the employers would much rather they would go to work at 7 o'clock, because it is light then, and they would only have to light up on one end of the day.

That is the reason this amendment is here. We have no disposition to question the honesty of this committee, but no man who is as broad as baby-ribbon will refuse to welcome an honest criticism. We do have the right to question their judgment. That has been done with every committee here, and I know of no reason why this committee should be set up against the rest, and it seems to me that any fair-minded man will not object to these amendments being offered, because it is in the power of this Senate to reject that bill in toto, if they see fit, as it stands at this minute, although I don't think it is the desire of this Senate to do anything of the kind. We are all interested in it, and want to see it have a passage, but we want a bill that is fair to all. We must bear in mind we are not called upon to punish anybody, but to see justice dealt out to everybody alike.

I have another amendment here—

Mr. MURPHY of Cumberland: Mr. President, it seems to me it is proper to take them up one at a time.

The PRESIDENT: He isn't offering the amendments now. He is stating the reasons why the action of the Senate should be re-considered.

Mr. FLAHERTY: Can I reply to the Senator from York in regard to that amendment he just offered.

The PRESIDENT: Does the Senator from York yield to the Senator from Cumberland?

Mr. EMERY: Certainly.