

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# LEGISLATIVE RECORD

OF THE

## Seventy-Ninth Legislature

OF THE

## STATE OF MAINE

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1919

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AUGUSTA  
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tain public bonds from taxation. (New Draft.)

House 449: Resolve, in favor of Frank Williams, administrator of the estate of Nicola DiNora, late of Boston, state of Massachusetts. (New Draft.)

#### Passed to be Engrossed

Senate 16: An Act granting to women the right to vote for Presidential electors.

It was reported from the committee on bills in third reading. Report accepted.

Mr. PIKE of Eastport: Mr. Speaker and gentlemen of the House: A few days ago a distinguished lady of this State wrote me a letter in which she stated that she considered that anyone who voted for a referendum upon the question of woman's suffrage would be distinctly unfriendly to the cause of suffrage. If you noted my vote yesterday, you know that I voted to submit that question to a referendum—not a referendum at a general election, because in the past it has been shown that a very small percentage of the voters who vote for Governor exercise their right to vote upon the constitutional amendments; but I voted that it be submitted to a special election in which the attention of the voters of Maine might be focused on that one question, and we would then get a fair expression of their views. I believe in the referendum and I believe in the justice of this measure now pending before this House. It has been the custom in prior Legislatures, and I think in this one, that if any member is opposed to any particular bill, he is opposed to the referendum upon it. That is not my position. I favor this bill, and yet I believe it is one of great consequence and that the people of Maine at a special election should decide it. The wisdom of this House, however, has ruled otherwise, and I submit to its judgment.

Gentlemen, the emancipation of women down through the ages has been mighty slow—very gradual. Under the old common law she was not recognized as a person with hardly any civil rights.

The husband had the right to inflict corporal punishment within reasonable bounds. I am not quite so sure about the present common law but he still retains that right. Not many generations ago women were burned at the stake for what men described as the crime of witchcraft, and that, gentlemen, be it said to its eternal disgrace, in territory of the State of Maine—or perhaps this territory belonged to Massachusetts at that time, Maine not having been set off as a separate State. Slowly and gradually she is securing to herself some of the rights to which she is justly entitled. When and by whose authority did man usurp to himself the right to set himself up as lord and woman as his vassal? Where do you find it, gentlemen? Is it in the temporal or spiritual laws? I fail to find it, and yet man has usurped to himself that right. It is his to dictate the laws; it is woman's duty to obey them—a condition where one-half of the country sets up a dictatorship over the other half.

Is woman's suffrage a new venture, gentlemen? Are we traveling along a new path? What is the experience of this country upon that? I desire briefly to call your attention to the states that have now adopted woman's suffrage and the countries also. Women have full suffrage in New Zealand, Australia, Great Britain—that limited monarchy Great Britain—Canada, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and Holland. They have full suffrage in the following states of the union: Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, Alaska, Montana, Nevada, New York, Michigan, South Dakota and Oklahoma. Woman's suffrage was first inaugurated in this country in the territory of Wyoming in 1869. It worked so well that when that state applied for admission to the union in 1890 it was incorporated in the constitution of that state. Since that time the states which I have already mentioned have adopted that principle.

Now, gentlemen, we are largely guided in the decision of public questions by what the great leaders of them in this nation have said and I want to refer very briefly to the position that

the public men of this country have taken upon this question.

Senator Brady of Idaho has said: "Idaho has enjoyed the advantages and blessings of equal suffrage for 18 years and I can recommend it as a federal measure."

Senator Thompson of Kansas has said: "None of the objections raised against woman's suffrage have ever been experienced in actual practice."

Representative Brodbeck of Pennsylvania said: "I believe the granting of woman's suffrage will do more for the moral questions before the people than all the ministers in the pulpit have been able to do in the last two decades."

Lincoln has said, one of the greatest Presidents this country ever had, whose memory is respected by all irrespective of party: "I would have all share in the privileges of government who assist in bearing its burdens, but no means excluding woman."

And what has our late honored ex-President, Roosevelt, said in a posthumous article appearing after his death in a great publication in this country entitled "Eyes to the Front," appearing last month: "There should be no further delay in giving the women the right to vote by federal amendment. It is absurd to further haggle about the matter." That, gentlemen, is probably his last great message to the American people.

What, gentleman, has the President of this country said upon this question? In a statement addressed to Congress very recently he said: "I believe that the full and sincere democratic reconstruction of the world, for which we are striving and which we are determined to bring about at any cost, will not have been completely or adequately attained until women are admitted to the suffrage, and that only by that action can the nations of the world realize for the benefit of future generations the full ideal forces of opinion or the full humane forces of action. The services of women during this supreme crisis of the world's history have been of the most signal usefulness and distinction. The war could not have been fought without them or its sacrifices endured. It is high time that

some part of our debt of gratitude to them should be acknowledged and paid and the full acknowledgment they ask is their admission to suffrage."

War has its heroes and war has its heroines. I shall not take much of the time of this House to discuss the part that women have played in this great struggle. I want and could expect to see no greater exhibition of bravery than the Red Cross nurse, Edith Cavell, who calmly and resolutely stood before the firing squad of the Prussian army, regretting that she had but one life to give for her country. Woman should have the right to vote. She prepares the child for the world, and I urge upon you with all the emphasis at my command—help her to prepare the world for the child.

Mr. Speaker, at this time may I inquire, through the Chair, of the gentleman from Augusta, Mr. Maher, I understood from his position yesterday that he was in favor of the referendum upon this measure. May I now inquire of him if he is opposed to the bill itself?

The SPEAKER: The gentleman from Augusta, Mr. Maher, may reply if he wishes.

Mr. MAHER of Augusta: I will answer, gentlemen, as simply and clearly as I can: Yes, I am. (Applause.)

Mr. PIKE: Then I say, gentlemen, by whose judgment shall we be guided? Shall it be by the experience of forty years? Shall it be by the judgment of the great men of this country, or shall it be by the judgment of the gentleman from Augusta, Mr. Maher? (Applause.) I respect his judgment, although I fundamentally disagree with him. I believe it to be the conviction of his heart, but yet in the face of the testimony that has been presented I cannot agree with him.

Something has been said that if this right were conferred upon women that they would not exercise it. Now that has not been true in practice. Out of a total of 808,093 Chicago voters registered in anticipation of a municipal election on April first 303,586 are women. This is said to be the best showing which

women in that city have made since they were granted a limited franchise. Those who persist in saying that women would not take the trouble to vote if given the chance should ponder on these figures. It ought to be added that in 23 of the 35 wards of Chicago, the names of more women than of men were recorded on the final day of registration.

Just one other note along that line. In answer to a set of questions sent out by the suffragists, 140 mayors in the four oldest equal suffrage states, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Idaho, and in cases where women had municipal suffrage at the time, unanimously replied, first, that women do vote in large numbers, second, that women are public spirited and take an intelligent interest in public affairs, and third, that the vote of disreputable women is a negligible factor.

I have been a consistent advocate of suffrage for many years. I was in favor of it in the first Legislature that I attended, several years ago. I have been a student of the subject since that time. I have seen absolutely no reasons why I should revise my judgment. Since that time states have been coming with me upon the matter, and men in public life, who heretofore were opposed to it, have swung into line; and I say to you, gentlemen, that I see no reason at this time why I should not re-affirm my judgment on this great cause. Volumes have been written of this question, and I might stand here and talk until the next National Congress submits this amendment to the people, and yet I would not have covered all the phases of this great question. I want to say to you, gentlemen, that I hope this resolve will have a passage. It will be a movement for better law in Maine. It is a movement that means better government for our good old State, and I hope to see the bill have a passage. (Applause.)

Mr. BEAN of Minot: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that when the vote is taken, it be taken by the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER: The question is on the third reading of the bill. It is moved and seconded that when the vote is taken, it be taken by the yeas and nays. All those in favor of its being taken by the yeas and nays will rise.

A sufficient number having arisen the yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER: All those who are in favor of the bill having its third reading at this time will say yes when their names are called, and those who are not in favor of its having its third reading at this time will answer no when their names are called. The clerk will call the roll.

YEA—Adams, Allan of Portland, Anderson, Arthur, Austin of Milford, Barnes, Baxter, Bean, Bowie, Bragdon Brann, Brewster, Brown, Burns of Madison, Buzzell, Carlton, Cates Chamberlain of Winslow, Chellis, Clason, Cochrane, Colcord, Cole, Conary, Corliss, Cowan, Crabtree, Cunningham, Dain, Davis of Old Town, Dolloff, Dunn, Dutton, Fagan, Farnsworth, Farrington, Foss, Fuller, Garcelon, Gray, Grinnell, Hatch, Hinkley, Holley, Hussey, Jordan of Cape Elizabeth, Jordan of New Gloucester, Lanpher, Macomber, Marr, Mason, Miller Millett, Mulligan, Murch, Murchie, Murray, Orff, Overlock, Perkins of Boothbay Harbor, Perkins of Orono, Pike Plummer, Porter, Putnam, Ricker, Ridlon, Rowe, Rowell, Sanborn, Smith Stacey, Stevens, Storm, Swift, Thomas of South Portland, Tilden, Varney of Windham, Warren, Washburn, Weatherbee, Williams of Auburn, Williams of Wells, Wilson of Presque Isle, Wyman—85.

NAY—Alden, Audibert, Austin of South Berwick, Berry, Burns of Eagle Lake, Carey, Case, Chamberlain of Lebanon, Chaplin, Clifford, Coulombe, Crane, Daigle, Davis of Freeport, Doyle, Dunning, Eaton, Flint, Fortes, Fowles, Gilmour, Granville, Greeley, Hammond, Hanson, Houghton, Jilson, Jones, Laisier, Leathers, Leonard, Maher, Mathews, McLeary, Mitchell, Morin, Nelson, O'Connell, O'Leary, Owen, Pattee Peabody, Reed, Ring, Roberts, Rounds Savage, Simons, Small, Stanley, Sweatt, Thomas of Harpswell, Varney of Jonesboro, Wilson of Portland—54.

ABSENT—Allen of Sanford, Brackett Bradford, Casey, Furbish, Hisler, Langelier, Love, Mace, Prillips, Sawyer Sullivan—12.

Eighty-five having voted in the affirmative and 54 in the negative, it was voted to give the bill its third reading at this time. (Applause.)

The bill then received its third reading and was passed to be engrossed.