

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LEGISLATIVE RECORD

OF THE

*One Hundred and Fourth  
Legislature*

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

1969

KENNEBEC JOURNAL  
AUGUSTA, MAINE

(On motion of Mr. Martin of Eagle Lake, tabled pending passage to be engrossed and specially assigned for tomorrow.)

### Third Reader

#### Tabled and Assigned

Resolve Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Pledging Credit of State for Loans of Maine School Building Authority (S. P. 97) (L. D. 307)

Was reported by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading and read the second time.

(On motion of Mr. Birt of East Millinocket, tabled pending passage to be engrossed and specially assigned for Tuesday, March 4.)

Resolve Reimbursing Mars Hill Utility District for Bonds Issued for Sewer Construction (H. P. 113) (L. D. 129)

Was reported by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, read the second time, passed to be engrossed and sent to the Senate.

### Third Reader

#### Tabled and Assigned

Resolve Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Regulating the Size of the House of Representatives (H. P. 356) (L. D. 464)

Was reported by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading and read the second time.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bath, Mr. Ross.

Mr. ROSS: Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I am not going to join one of those who table things this morning. I present to this bill House Amendment "A" under Filing H-58, move its adoption, and will speak to it.

House Amendment "A" (H-58) was read by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the same gentleman.

Mr. ROSS: Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: Basically, some of you heard in my non-debate remarks last Thursday that I favor the size of the House the way it is. However, there are some persons who are really serious about cutting it. They maintain it would give more equal representation; that it would be a cost saving; that it would be a chance to

increase salaries to where perhaps they should be; there would be an opportunity to provide for proper legislative staff, that it would be more efficient. Most of these things I do not believe.

However, for the benefit of those who do, I say let's go one step further. Several of us have had experience in the other body at the end of the corridor. They do a very fine job down there with thirty-two members. I believe that perhaps we could do just as good a job, and so let's legislate ourselves their equal.

The SPEAKER: The pending question is the adoption of House Amendment "A." The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lewiston, Mr. Jalbert.

Mr. JALBERT: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House: When I thought I was of voting age, the way that we would attack a unanimous report in order to defeat it was by saying, present an amendment excepting our individual counties from the measure. This is a boy's version, and I move the indefinite postponement of this amendment because I would like to hear debate on the bill itself as it was reported out of the Committee unanimously.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bridgewater, Mr. Finemore.

Mr. FINEMORE: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House: I would like to move for indefinite postponement of the whole bill and I would like to speak on it.

The SPEAKER: The Chair would advise the gentleman that the only matter before the House now is House Amendment "A," and the gentleman may proceed if he wishes to debate House Amendment "A."

The pending question is the motion of the gentleman from Lewiston, Mr. Jalbert, that House Amendment "A" be indefinitely postponed. Is the House ready for the question? All those in favor of the indefinite postponement of House Amendment "A" will say yes, those opposed, say no.

A viva voce vote being taken, the motion did prevail.

Mr. Stillings of Berwick offered House Amendment "B" and moved its adoption.

House Amendment "B" (H-59) was read by the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Berwick, Mr. Stillings.

Mr. STILLINGS: Mr. Speaker, Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I noted as I read and listened to some of the comments on this bill last week the statement was made that this proposal to reduce the size of our House of Representatives would bring us closer to "average".

Now I don't think there is anything wonderful about this — being average simply makes you the best of the worst and the worst of the best.

I see nothing wrong with the size of the House remaining at its present strength of 151 members. This number brings us close to the people and makes us more responsive to them, and our State does cover a large geographic area; if we want to change our size, let's do it in keeping with the motto of our great State — I Lead!

Our neighbor to the west, New Hampshire, now enjoys the distinction of having the largest lower branch of any of our state legislatures. It also has no sales tax. They refuse to even think about an income tax. Until recently it was the only state with a lottery. Sunday sales of spirits are allowed. And I am told that our people go there in great numbers to purchase liquor and cigarettes at a lower price.

I think it is now time for Maine to do something to get an edge on New Hampshire. Since their lower house has 400 members, I propose that the size of this house be increased to 401, which will mean that not only will we have surpassed our sister state in this regard, but Maine will have the signal honor of leading the nation with the largest lower house of any state legislature.

On motion of Mr. Jalbert of Lewiston, House Amendment "B" (H-59) was indefinitely postponed on a viva voce vote.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Bath, Mr. Ross.

Mr. ROSS: Mr. Speaker, now we get to the crux of the matter,

Twelve years ago I was the House Chairman of the State Government Committee. I had a great deal of respect for that Committee then and I do now. The Chairman, Mr. Dennett, is astute, capable and conscientious, but aside from these qualities, he is one of our most eloquent orators. He is truly a satirical rhetorician, whose verbosity emits the ultimate in exuberance. I hold in esteem the rest of the members of this august group. One is my seatmate from across the aisle, the competent and knowledgeable gentleman from Manchester, Mr. Rideout. One is even a colleague and friend of mine who lives only a few houses from me on the same street in that famous place which is steeped in antiquity, the delightful City of Bath, Miss Watson.

Yes, normally I would trust a unanimous committee report from this august group. However, this time, I believe that they had a slight lapse of memory. Our 151 member House is neither excessive nor ungainly. We, although we are the largest state in the New England states by far, our House is smaller than all of the others by an average of 100 persons. No one has proved that this House is hard to control. As a matter of fact, we have a national reputation of having one of the best run Houses with the highest degree of decorum in the entire Country, and of this we should be justifiably proud.

Any cut would be depriving our citizens the true representation to which they surely are entitled. In my opinion, changes like this are not progressive, but just making change for change sake.

I now move that this bill and all its accompanying papers be indefinitely postponed and request a division.

The SPEAKER: The gentleman from Bath, Mr. Ross, now moves that L. D. 464 be indefinitely postponed.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Madawaska, Mr. Levesque.

Mr. LEVESQUE: Mr. Speaker and Ladies and Gentlemen of the House: I think this morning you have one of the more unique pieces

of legislation coming before this branch that has been recommended not necessarily the same number represented in this group, but as a cross section of our country. For at least the last ten years National Legislative Research groups throughout the country have recommended in a lot of instances the reduction of branches of the Legislature because of a better system of being able to operate with; and I can also remember in the last six years the National Leadership Conferences have predominantly recommended that the branches of the Legislature, both the House and the Senate, reduce to a workable size so that as the gentleman from Bath, Mr. Ross has pointed out, better staff, better equipment, better groups to work with, and also a more equitable working salary.

I think if for no other reason other than that, as the theme that was used in the not too distant future, or not too distant past, and it might be used again in the future I might add, I think it is very well time for a change not only for the sake of changing but for the sake of better government to our own people. And I think by reducing the number of House — as a matter of fact I have a bill in Mr. Slosberg's office to reduce the House to a seventy-five membership and to the other branch twenty-five, which would be a two-thirds comparison, but I am willing to drop that bill in the Research Department if we can agree that this number ninety-six will be favorable by both branches of the Legislature. I think ninety-six will be a good working group and I hope that each member of this House here will take this, the recommendation of the National Research Council, the National Leadership Conferences who for years have been advocating the reduction of legislative groups.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Lewiston, Mr. Jalbert.

Mr. JALBERT: Mr. Speaker and Members of the House: I share with the gentleman from Bath, the same feelings that he has, although on not such eloquence of vocabu-

lary toward the gentleman from Kittery, Mr. Dennett.

Also, this as I stated before, was the unanimous report of the committee and certainly we should hear from the people who are on that committee. However, I would like mostly to hear from the gentleman from Kittery, Mr. Dennett. Also, this is a very important piece of legislation, and for that reason, noting that the gentleman is not present, certainly because of the storm, I would hope that some member would table this measure until tomorrow.

Thereupon, on motion of Mr. Rideout of Manchester, tabled pending the motion of Mr. Ross of Bath to indefinitely postpone the Resolve, and specially assigned for tomorrow.

#### Amended Bills

Bill "An Act relating to Privileges and Appurtenances in Short Form Deeds" (H. P. 37) (L. D. 38)

Bill "An Act relating to Date of Town Meeting of Town of Fort Fairfield" (H. P. 140) (L. D. 162)

Bill "An Act to Clarify Certain Motor Vehicle Laws" (H. P. 246) (L. D. 301)

Bill "An Act relating to Filing Campaign Reports" (H. P. 323) (L. D. 410)

Were reported by the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading, read the third time, passed to be engrossed as amended by Committee Amendment "A" and sent to the Senate.

#### Order out of Order

Mr. Levesque of Madawaska presented the following Joint Order and moved its passage:

WHEREAS, by Act of the Legislature, the Town of Madawaska was incorporated on February 24, 1869; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Madawaska is now having its centennial celebration; and

WHEREAS, the Madawaska Centennial Committee has commemorated the town's anniversary through the publication of an impressive memorial booklet detailing the cultural background and history of the town, and particu-