

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Record

OF THE

One Hundred and Seventh Legislature

(First Special Session)

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

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are criticizing are compassionate programs. But here is an area where there is an opportunity for this legislature to close the door.

It is extremely disheartening to observe somebody who has taken an unemployment program which was passed with compassion and turn it to his own purposes. The professional system beater who identifies ways to work long enough to build up his benefits, then he leaves and takes the summer off, and comes back into the system after his benefits have been depleted.

I have listened with great care to the debate here today and I say that we always think of a dozen reasons why we can't tighten up these programs. I say that the minority of the Labor Committee has identified an honest and a basically sound way of tightening up this program, and I hope that the Senate goes along and tightens it up. I think that this is an important vote and I request a roll call.

The PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Penobscot, Senator Pray.

Mr. PRAY: Mr. President and Members of the Senate: Just to respond to a couple of statements made by my good friend, Senator Roberts. In the situation that I mentioned the Lewiston woman was not given good cause and she is going through the twelve week waiting period. The other instance that I spoke about, I talked about an individual who wanted to return after the situation was over and then could not find employment. If that individual cannot find employment then they cannot earn eight times their weekly benefit amount.

I also pointed to the fact that we do have individuals that we hear about that I would call the habitual offenders of the unemployment laws, and they make a habit perhaps of taking summer or winter vacations collecting unemployment checks, but we also had from the Manpower Affairs a figure earlier this year that that was under one-half of one percent that were abusing the laws. I have had a number of calls since I have been down here, individuals calling me up telling me about their next door neighbor who is on welfare, unemployment, and getting everything else from the state, and there is nothing wrong with the individual. When I asked if that individual would like to make a complaint and put his name behind it, no, he doesn't. Usually when they do check into it, as many of you know, according to the law those individuals are qualified and they meet all the requirements to receive the benefits from the state assistance that they are getting.

I think that we will be making a mistake if we act hastily on this to cover up what many people see as a problem but really isn't. I think we are closing the door on a lot of people, too many people, as to disqualify them completely from being able to collect under voluntary quit requirements.

The PRESIDENT: Is the Senate ready for the question? A roll call has been requested. In order for the Chair to order a roll call, it must be the expressed desire of one-fifth of those Senators present and voting. Will all those Senators in favor of a roll call please rise in their places until counted.

Obviously more than one-fifth having arisen, a roll call is ordered. The pending question before the Senate is the motion by the Senator from Penobscot, Senator Pray, that this bill be indefinitely postponed. A "Yes" vote will be in favor of indefinite postponement; a "No" vote will be opposed.

The Secretary will call the roll.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Senators Conley, Danton, Marcotte, Merrill, O'Leary, Pray, Reeves.

NAYS: Senators E. Berry, R. Berry, Carbonneau, Cianchette, Clifford, Collins, Corson, Cummings, Curtis, Cyr, Gahagan, Graham, Greeley, Hichens, Huber, Jackson, Katz, Mc-

Nally, Roberts, Speers, Thomas, Trotzky, Wyman.

ABSENT: Senators Graffam, Johnston.

Mr. Graham of Cumberland was granted Leave to change his vote from "Nay" to "Yea".

A roll call was had. 8 Senators having voted in the affirmative, and 22 Senators having voted in the negative, with two Senators being absent, the motion did not prevail.

Thereupon, the Minority Ought to Pass as Amended Report of the Committee was Accepted in non-concurrence and the Bill Read Once. Committee Amendment "A" was Read and Adopted and the Bill, as Amended, Tomorrow Assigned for Second Reading.

Enactors

The Committee on Engrossed Bills report as truly and strictly engrossed the following:

An Act Creating the Maine Railroad Equipment Authority. (H. P. 1858) (L. D. 2026)

An Act Relating to Requests for Absentee Ballots. (H. P. 2062) (L. D. 2232)

Which were Passed to be Enacted and having been signed by the President, were by the Secretary presented to the Governor for his approval.

Emergency

An Act to Exempt Emergency Vehicles and School Buses From the Statutory Prohibition of the Use of Studded Tires From May to October. (H. P. 1953) (L. D. 2138)

This being an emergency measure, and having received the affirmative votes of 27 members of the Senate, was Passed to be Enacted and, having been signed by the President, was by the Secretary presented to the Governor for his approval.

Emergency

An Act Relating to the Initiative and Referendum Processes. (H. P. 2027) (L. D. 2203)

The PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes the Senator from Kennebec, Senator Reeves.

Mr. REEVES: Mr. President and Members of the Senate: I know it is late in the day to speak on this bill but it seems to me that it sets up a double standard on petitions, one standard for the initiative petitions and another for nominating petitions. I feel that this would be unfair and I urge the Senate to vote against it.

The PRESIDENT: The pending question before the Senate is the enactment of L. D. 2203.

Thereupon, this being an emergency measure and having received the affirmative vote of 27 members of the Senate, with one Senator voting in the negative, the Bill Passed to be Enacted and, having been signed by the President, was by the Secretary presented to the Governor for his approval.

Mr. Merrill of Cumberland was granted unanimous consent to address the Senate:

Mr. MERRILL: Mr. President and Members of the Senate: I am one of those members of the Senate that subscribes to the Bangor Daily News, and from time to time I read it and I am troubled by what are distortions of the truth, but recognizing that no one is perfect, and recognizing also that old maxim that if a politician gets into a situation where he is criticizing the press, the press always wins, in the past I have failed to say anything. Today, however, they just stretched the truth a little bit too far in an editorial which refers to the Republican Party as having been founded on the fundamental Jeffersonian principles. Well, I am sorry, but I have to rise to point out to the Bangor Daily News and everyone that it is my party that claims Jefferson. If the Bangor Daily News is allowed to get away with this one, I am afraid tomorrow they will be telling us the Tories won the Revolution.

Papers From The House

Out of order and under suspension of the rules, the Senate voted to take up the following:

Joint Order

ORDERED, the Senate concurring, that the following bill be recalled from the Governor's Office to the House: "An Act Relating to Employment of Drug Inspectors by the State Board of Pharmacy" (H. P. 1879) (L. D. 2054) (H. P. 2242)

Comes from the House, Read and Passed.

Which was Read and Passed in concurrence.

On motion by Mrs. Cummings of Penobscot, Adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.