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The MAINE VOTER

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VOL. XVIII

JULY, 1970

Number 1

COUNCIL REVIEW

We can't imagine anyone not enjoying two days on Mount Desert Island and the delegates and guests at State Council were no exception. Mrs. Hans Meier and her committee of MDI members thought of every need for busy League representatives. The accommodations were charming and business was conducted with one eye cast toward beautiful Frenchman's Bay, just below the Inn's windows.

We did not let the perfection of the setting and arrangements slow our discussions, however. State Board members and League delegates covered a wide range of topics. In this VOTER are articles covering our new position paper on air, the consensus questions for our pesticides studies, and the initial plans for a Workshop on the state income tax.

Our banquet speakers were two state Representatives, Democrat Patrick N. McTeague of Brunswick and Republican David B. Benson of Southwest Harbor, who shared with us their observations of the 104th Legislature. They discussed the organizational arrangements of the legislature and touched on some League interests: reduction of the House, abolition of the Executive Council, and increased pay and staff.

League delegates were enthusiastic about the prospect of turning our efforts to the problem of staff for legislators.

Provisional League Organized in Houlton

The first organizational meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Houlton Area was held in May. With thirty-nine charter members, it is now state-approved as a Provisional League.

The Houlton group adopted a budget and by-laws and elected the following officers: Mrs. Merle Fenlason, president; Mrs. Robert Masters, first vice-president; Mrs. Treston Bubar, second vice-president; Mrs. Guy London, secretary; and Miss Elaine O'Donnell, treasurer. During the provisional period the Houlton League will continue to build its membership in order to carry out its community and voter services.

The Maine League is delighted to welcome the Houlton Area Provisional League. We now have seven recognized and two provisional Leagues. Mrs. Eugene Wakely, state organization chairman, is preparing plans for future Leagues and has her eye cast toward the Saco-Biddeford area and Dover-Foxcroft. Dot is tireless in her efforts to meet with potential League-builders and she confidently expects that League number ten will be a reality during our 1970-71 year.

League Urges Amendments . . .

In our studies of the last three years on air pollution and its control, we included a detailed examination of the Air Law passed in 1969. Our research on methods that are needed to control this pollution led us to the conclusion that the law needed strengthening to be as effective as possible. Consequently we are issuing a specific statement, in addition to our general consensus on air, urging that certain amendments be made during the next session of the Legislature. While this may be a departure from traditional League procedure, it seems a necessary step if we wish to build public support for our recommendations. There is a tendency to relax and "let things go along" after a law is passed; however, the passage of a law is only the first step—particularly when the law is deficient in certain aspects. With the high concern for our environment at this time, we may have the opportunity to build support for strengthening the Air Law, aimed at the control of air pollution.

In order to improve the Law, the League strongly urges the 105th Legislature to consider the following modifications:

- (1) That the air quality and emission standards set by the Environmental Improvement Commission should remain in effect as law if standards are not approved or modified by the next session of the legislature.
- (2) That licenses granted by the EIC to allow air emissions should be for a specified time and subject to renewal.
- (3) That as a condition to granting a variance, the emissions involved must not damage plant or animal life.
- (4) That the EIC be urged to spot check industries, without warning, for air pollution.
- (5) That the cost to the EIC and the State of pursuing convicted violators of air standards and emissions be paid by the convicted violators.
- (6) That industries with air emission licenses be required to have adequate monitoring of their air emissions with the results reported daily or weekly to the EIC. That these results be available to the public as regards the quantity and quality of the emissions.
- (7) That air pollution should be a civil as well as a criminal offense thus allowing the state to sue for damages caused by air pollution.
- (8) That the EIC have sufficient counsel assigned directly to it from the Attorney General's office.
- (9) In addition, the League of Women voters of Maine recommends the following addition to Title 29, s. 2127, Maintenance of motor vehicle air pollution control systems:
that Maine require that anti-smog devices (on those cars on which they are standard equipment) be in good repair in order to get an inspection sticker.

State Agency Profile Number 1

PESTICIDE CONTROL BOARD

Composition:

- Commissioner of Agriculture
- Commissioner of Health and Welfare
- Forestry Commissioner
- Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Game
- Commissioner of Sea and Shore Fisheries
- Chairman of Public Utilities Commission
- Chairman of Highway Commission
- Chairman of Environmental Improvement Commission

Chairman: elected annually by Board members

Purpose and Policy: to regulate sale and application of chemical insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and other chemical pesticides in the interests of safeguarding the public health, safety, and welfare.

Functions:

- Issues licenses to commercial applicators at \$10.00 annually
- May require examination of applicators
- May restrict license as to type of equipment used
- May suspend license up to 10 days, revoke, or modify license provision
- Requires proof of financial responsibility from applicator
- May inspect equipment and require repairs
- Makes regulations regarding sale and application of pesticides
- Designates, after public hearings, critical areas and

limited use of pesticides therein

- Designates unsafe practices in application
- May suspend pesticide use in emergency situations not to exceed 10 days
- May require records and reports from applicators, publish information

Enforcement is carried out by agency personnel represented on the Board. A **fine** for a convicted violation of the 1965 Pesticide Control law or regulations established by the Board is set at not more than \$100 for a first offense and not more than \$500 for each subsequent offense. **Appeal** is made through the Superior Court.

Some of the **regulations** that have been issued by the Board include:

- Definition of "financial responsibility" in terms of minimum protective insurance required of pesticide applicators.
- Requirement of specific reports on all commercial application.
- Stipulation of use of safety measures in application.
- Requirement that pesticides used be registered by the Department of Agriculture.
- Prior approval of Board before application near public water supplies.
- Rules for disposal of leftover pesticides and containers.

Annual Budget: \$20,600.

Staff (2): Supervisor of Pesticide Program and Secretary.

PESTICIDES

Next Fall the Maine LWV will grapple with the problem of pesticides and their relationship to our environment. Our goal is to reach a consensus by January 1.

At present in Maine pesticides usage is regulated by the Pesticides Control Board under the Maine Department of Agriculture. This brings us to the first consensus question: What should be our main concern in pesticides regulation? Should we strengthen the agency in control of pesticides? If not, where should we focus our attention? Since pesticides usage is largely connected with some form of agriculture, it has been traditionally regulated by the Department of Agriculture. An objection has been raised by some persons, however, that this presents a question of conflict of interest and that regulation more properly belongs to an independent agency such as the Environmental Improvement Commission. While the argument may have some merit, serious consideration should be given to this proposal before adding another sphere of control to the under-staffed, under-financed and over-worked EIC.

In addition to determining general policy positions on who should regulate pesticides and how much power this determining agency should have is the study of the pesticides themselves. There are two major considerations here: (1) What should be included in our general LWV position on pesticides? (2) Should the League work for an absolute ban on "hard" pesticides (such as DDT, DDD, Dieldrin)?

NOTE: The Maine Pesticides Control Board held a hearing in April to determine the feasibility of an absolute ban on the use of hard pesticides. When this article was written no decision had yet been announced.

Certain factors play a large part in determining the possible hazards of pesticides: *Toxicity of the material*—is it high or low? *Persistence of the material*—short-lived or long-lived like DDT? Is it harmless when it breaks down, or does it recombine or change into something more toxic? *Cumulative effect*—does it build up in the food chain like DDT? *Frequency and timing of application*—how often must it be used? What are the ecological conditions when it must be used? *Method and rate of application*—how is it used? How much is required to be effective? Aerial treatments? Soil treatments?¹

As an example of the application of these factors, parathion is a highly toxic pesticide that can kill a human applicator upon contact but breaks down quickly in the environment. DDT, on the other hand, is only mildly toxic to man on contact but we now know that it persists in the environment for years with its total, cumulative effects as yet unknown.

"There are some 900 basic chemical compounds used to formulate thousands of synthetic commercial pesticides. Classed according to purpose, these include insecticides, herbicides, miticides, fungicides, and rodenticides."² Most well known is DDT, "but there are many others such as

Pesticides

endrin, dieldrin, aldrin, chlordane, toxaphene, lindane, methoxychlor, heptachlor, parathion, malathion, captan, carbaryl, warfarin, etc., etc."³

"There are chlorinated hydrocarbons (DDT), organic phosphates (malathion), and carbamates (carbaryl). Their properties, dosage, effects, and use vary widely."⁴ In determining the hazards of any one such pesticide the questions listed above play a part.

Do we need pesticides? Most experts in entomology tell us that we do need pesticides to preserve our food supply and our public health (they also deplore their indiscriminate use without regard for the effects on our ecology). To put this need in dollars and cents it was estimated in 1967 that losses from insects in the U. S. were well over \$10 billion annually, plant diseases and nematodes over \$5 billion, weeds and other plants over \$4½ billions, and, of course, no dollar value could be put upon losses to the public health.

The danger of indiscriminate pesticide usage in our environment is now so well-documented that it needs no illustration in this short space. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* is excellent source material on this matter. With our present environmental concern, similar documentation of the hazards of pesticides can be found in leading weekly magazines and in our newspapers.

Are there alternatives? There are some hopeful signs that future pest control may employ methods less lethal to other inhabitants of the ecosystem. Among these are: *Integrated control*—use of pesticides that are lethal only to the particular specie that is harmful; *Biological control*—the use of natural predators of a harmful specie to keep that specie under control; *Cultural control*—manipulation of time, temperature, humidity and the alternation of food crops to change the narrow environmental requirements of pest species to subject them to easier control; *Sterilization*—release of sterile insects into the natural population or the introduction of a sterilant into the ecosystem; *Attractants and Repellants*—study for the development of long-term repellancy to harmful insects; *Genetic Manipulation*—mass raising, with subsequent release into the natural population, of a specie with a genetic aberration that would be to our advantage.⁵

At this time it seems that chemical insecticides are with us for a long time to come, if not permanently. However, we can demand that their effects be well-documented before their usage is allowed and then that the usage be held to an absolute minimum. We can re-examine our own demands as housewives that all fruits and vegetables be absolutely free of even a remote sign that a bug has been near it. The alternatives listed above may be used in conjunction with synthetic pesticides in an integrated method of control. A great deal of money and research and new emphasis on living within the laws of nature instead of outside them are necessary before such an approach becomes a reality.

¹ M. T. Hilborn, Professor of Plant Pathology, University of Maine; *Pesticides in Our Environment*, edited by F. E. Hutchinson, University of Maine, 1967.

² National Conservation Foundation Newsletter, "Pollution by Pesticides," April 25, 1969; p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ L. W. Boulanger, Professor of Entomology, Hutchinson, *op. cit.*

PESTICIDE USAGE IN MAINE—A TEST CASE

As of 1967 the average annual use of insecticides was estimated to be 742,000 pounds for 458,000 acres (2.2% of the state's total land area). In that year herbicide usage was estimated as 29,000 pounds and 444,500 gallons. Of particular interest this summer is a forestry test center in northern Aroostook County. Japanese researchers have developed a new pesticide, sumithion, which has a lower toxicity than DDT (it has a three-day toxicity level compared to nearly two weeks for DDT) and is apparently non-residual (as far as is known it is gone in 48 hours). Entomologists feel it to be generally safer than DDT which has been used previously in spraying in Aroostook County. While sumithion has been used to some extent in the West, the U. S. Department of Agriculture refused to register it on the grounds of insufficient testing. The U. S. Forest Service suggested that Maine use it for spruce budworm control on 300,000 acres in Aroostook County. Consequently the area was designated a test center and Maine is receiving some federal funds and manpower for this undertaking.

Lost: The Gap Found: The Youth Of Maine

"We've just got to have a more informed citizenry."

"How do we get the people to participate in decisions that affect them?"

"The sales tax is regressive. We must work to have a more equitable distribution of the tax burden."

These and many more like them are the comments overheard at conferences involving the "youth" of Maine. Does this sound like the "gap?" To us it sounds like a challenge and a beckon to the League of Women Voters. We either have new allies in our efforts or we are lucky if we get a wave of recognition as they pass us on the way . . . to what? The League has a role to play in this new awakening of the young and committed generation.

The state Board's response to the invitation from National to follow through on the nationally-sponsored Youth Conference held last October was enthusiastic. We started by finding out where the youth of Maine are "at" or "where the action is." We picked up the eagerness, the commitment and the zeal for improving the lot of the citizens of Maine through legal legislative channels, "but please, a little faster." We are finding a hunger for our **Voters Manual** and our pamphlets on the state legislature. The League has a unique service of offering easily digested information to those who want to be more effective in getting legislators to vote their way.

We were recently invited by female students from St. Francis College who want to combine their efforts with the members of the Saco-Biddeford community. No, not just "us kids," no, not just "stop the Cambodia invasion." They say, "We want to find out how our adopted community works and we want to know our town." This may be the nucleus of another League in Maine.

We are planning to proceed on two fronts. We hope to bring some committed girls into the League (National Convention in the Year of the Voter approved 18-year old girls as eligible to be members of the LWV). We are also going to continue finding out their areas of concern and join forces with them. These areas might be: the environment; housing; education; property tax; and most important, our voters service and all that this encompasses.

We are excited at the prospect of new friendships and alliances. We hope and urge all of you to help us along on this new venture as we lead into the League's next fifty years.

CONSENSUS ON AIR

After study and discussion on the problems of air pollution facing the State of Maine, the League of Women Voters of Maine supports:

- management of Maine's air on a regional or air shed basis.
- a strong central agency, such as the Environmental Improvement Commission to be in charge of environmental improvement.
- adequate financing and staff for this agency to effectively carry out the responsibilities assigned to it.
- measures which will hold industry, communities, and individuals responsible for the wastes they create.
- more research to increase our knowledge of the effects of air pollution on our ecology and to find more effective ways of controlling this pollution.
- study and action on state, regional, and local solutions to the problem of solid waste disposal.
- encouragement of non-polluting commercial development in Maine.
- citizen participation in air resources decisions.

ON THE STATE LEVEL . . .

The Maine delegation to National Convention in May presented our petitions of 6,000 signatures to Senator Edmund S. Muskie. He reiterated his support for congressional representation for the citizens of Washington, D. C. The total collected throughout the country was more than 1,200,000 signatures. Since each state's congressional delegation received these petitions, the League hopes that Congress will soon pass the constitutional amendment required to give the nearly one million citizens in Washington a voting voice in our nation's affairs.

From petitions to flyers . . . Mrs. Charles Allen, state voters service chairman, reports that local Leagues distributed 7,500 state flyers before the June 15 referendum. And in addition a page and a half summary of candidates answers to the League's questions appeared in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* of June 14.

After a highly successful Council in Bar Harbor, next June we travel across the State to Lewiston for our 1971 State Convention. Mardy Wheeler and Pauline Dumont are the co-chairmen and already the wheels are rolling to make this a Convention to remember.

Mrs. Frederick Whittaker will be returning to the State Board after a six months' leave to assume her responsibilities as environmental resources chairman. Mrs. Richard Walker has very ably served as chairman *pro tem* and she has agreed to continue on the Board as state finance chairman during the 1970-71 League year. Mrs. Talbot Averill of Bangor will be our public relations chairman, replacing Mrs. Philip M. Lovejoy—whose service we all miss.

INCOME TAX WORKSHOP

The Maine League will begin an active year with a Workshop on **Income Tax—No Repeal**, on September 16, 1970 in Augusta. The exact location and details will be announced locally. After almost ten years of study and action on this item, League members rejoiced when the 104th Legislature passed the personal and corporate income tax bill into law just one year ago.

Maine receives approximately 50 million dollars in added revenues each biennium from income taxes. Yet many candidates for the legislature and other state offices are using "repeal" as a political football without stating how Maine can cut services or add other tax dollars. The efforts of Scott Lamb's group to repeal the income tax is gaining momentum as Fall approaches. The Lamb petition campaign is dedicated to gathering a required number of names (10% of the total votes cast in the last gubernatorial election) and will present the petition to the 105th Legislature when it convenes in January, 1971. If the Legislature receives the petition, it must vote to repeal the income tax law or the issue will be presented to the voters at the next referendum election, probably in the Fall of 1971.

Mrs. Dorothy Dunton, state income tax chairman, urges each member to attend the Workshop in September. "We must all make a special effort this Fall to give top priority to stopping tax-repeal forces."

50th Campaign Ends

The campaign for funds totaling \$11 million officially ended June 30. National Convention approved a special office whose function is to continue the drive on the national level to permit the League to contact more companies that might be willing to make a contribution to our 50th Anniversary celebration. In Maine the campaign ended with Lewiston's drive this past Spring. Each of our Leagues conducted an intensive campaign to reach all members and interested citizens, asking them to consider a contribution to the League drive.

The state League office has compiled each local's totals and 490 members pledged a total of nearly \$19,000 in Maine. This means 72% of our members made a contribution. We are very proud of the membership—each member carefully considered what the League means to her and to her community. A good majority believes enough in the League to help it into the next fifty years of study and action. Because of these contributions, local Leagues received extra dollars with which to work. Recently the state League of Women Voters received a check for \$665 from the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee. The check represents the state distribution of \$1.00 per member—and it came just in time to permit us to plan for the 1970-71 League year. The expense of maintaining a League office was to be carried from our anticipated share of 50th funds, but National could not send each state \$5 per member, as originally planned, because the campaign throughout the country realized fewer contributions to the League than expected. We still are hopeful that Maine will receive at least one or two more dollars per member since our reserves are depleted. It is recommended that state reserves total at least half the annual budget—a dream for the future. While we are short of dollars we should all be long on pride because our Leagues responded so positively to the Fiftieth Anniversary call.

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