

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

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1925

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✓ HOUSE BILL NO. 655 (Mr. DeLamater)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE MILITIA.

SENATOR DOTY:

Unless somebody requests it we will not read this bill.

GENERAL COLE:

I think General Payne can touch on the high spots, and that will be better than tiring you out by reading the entire bill.

GENERAL PAYNE:

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, I feel keenly the necessity of having to print this bill over. The State Armory Board and the National Guard Association are more or less responsible for changes in this bill. You will notice the first eleven sections are not changed at all, and the 12th section is changed to amend the staff of the Commander-in-Chief. That was brought about by some dissention in the appointment of the Assistant Adjutant General. Politically or otherwise, there was some reason why the Assistant Adjutant General was not appointed this year, and he has not been appointed, and that condition might arise from year to year, so the State Armory Board and the National Guard Association decided to ask the General Assembly to change that law so that the Adjutant General of the state would have the right the same as the head of other depart-

ments, to appoint his own assistant. That seems a reasonable thing. A department as important as the Military Department, which is run by the Adjutant General, should have an assistant or deputy who was not subject to political change. So this Section 12 is changed so that the Governor has the right to add one more colonel to his staff, to be an appointee of himself, and that's all. It simply adds one more colonel to the staff.

MR. WILDER:

Military or non-military ?

GENERAL PAYNE:

One or the other. Under the privileges of the Governor now a portion of the staff can be from civil life and the other portion from the National Guard, as he wishes. In that particular section it says how many shall be from the National Guard and the rest from the choice of the Governor. Governor Bingham appointed everybody who had military service. Of course we like that. Just like Virginia.

SECTION 13. Under this the Adjutant General has the right to appoint an assistant who shall have all the rights and privileges as prescribed by law for the Assistant Adjutant General. In other words, what we would like to do is to take as much

out of the political game as we can. This will give the Adjutant General the right to appoint an assistant or deputy not subject to change every time we have a change in administration. That was done two years ago in the case of the Quartermaster Department where we took the Assistant Quartermaster General out of politics and established the office of the Armory Board, <sup>inspector,</sup> which position Colonel Bissell holds now, an employee of the Military Department. I believe you will all agree that is good business policy. Previous to the World War there was no office as Assistant Adjutant General. That was established under Governor Lake's administration four years ago. The Assistant Adjutant General an employee of the state and not subject to change by each incoming administration.

MR. DELAMATER:

I would like to ask the status of Colonel Landers.

GENERAL PAYNE:

He was an employee of the State Department, a member of the Military Department. We don't like these important offices changed every two years. If they are good we would like to have them stay.

SENATOR WILDER:

Can the present statute be amended by just changing a few sections ?

GENERAL PAYNE:

You will find—we are introducing the Naval Militia into this.

SENATOR WILDER:

That's what I mean. The sections you are changing on the old bill. Why not just make amendments? Just say Section so-and-so is amended to read as follows:

GENERAL PAYNE:

Except in re-writing the law you would have to write the whole section over.

SENATOR WILDER:

But here you have 72 sections. Why not change the few you want changed and add a couple more at the end?

MR. DELAMATER:

You mean where it says "no change" in the final bill it would all have to be printed.

SENATOR WILDER:

Simply say: "The Acts of 1923 are amended to read as follows".

GENERAL PAYNE:

The only possible complication which might arise is the very slight changes where we introduce the words "sailor" or "naval militia".

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SENATOR DOTY:

Before you leave Section 13 don't you think it a good idea to put in the qualifications of the Assistant Adjutant-General?

GENERAL PAYNE:

I don't believe so. I think the Adjutant General must be the man to judge that man. Like the head of any department picking out a deputy or head clerk, a man who can administer the duties of the clerks in the office and leave the Adjutant General free to take care of the policies of the office.

SENATOR DOTY:

The only reason I suggested it is the embarrassing position it puts the Adjutant General in. He might have to turn down a good man, a friend of his, because he did not have the qualifications.

GENERAL PAYNE:

It is your suggestion that he be a military man of so many years service?

GENERAL COLE:

That would be all right. That is the kind of man who would be selected.

SENATOR DOTY:

I just make that as a suggestion.

GENERAL PAYNE:

SECTION 14 is more or less to clarify the duties of the Quartermaster General. There is a little conflict in Section 14 on the duties of the Armory Board Inspector and to straighten that out we have re-written Section 14. Also, regarding the bond of the Quartermaster General. Under the old law nothing was required as to bond. The statutes of the state requires an officer must be responsible and must furnish a bond.

Under SECTION 29 just the words necessary to include the Naval Militia.

Under SECTION 31 there has been more or less a question as to the renting of armories to agricultural associations, and so that the officers in charge of an armory will know how to handle it we put in: AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS THAT ARE NOW OR SHALL IN THE FUTURE RECEIVE STATE AID SHALL BE ALLOWED THE USE OF STATE ARMORIES FOR EXHIBITION PURPOSES AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED THE ACTUAL MAINTENANCE COST OF ARMORIES SO USED DURING THE PERIOD OF SUCH USE.

Mr. Healey agreed to that two years ago and I hope will agree to it now. Fortunately for the Military Department, the maintenance cost is more than the military rental.

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SECTION 36 is changed to include warrant officers. Warrant officers are a grade between enlisted personnel and commissioned personnel, but in the National Guard a warrant officer must furnish his own uniform, and there is no reason why he should not receive the same allowance as a commissioned officer. This also includes the Naval Militia.

SECTIONS 37 and 38 include the Naval Militia.

At the end of Section 38 at the request of the American Legion and other veteran organizations we have added:  
WHEN REQUESTED BY COMPETENT AUTHORITY THE ADJUTANT GENERAL WILL ORDER AN UNIFORMED FIRING SQUAD FROM THE NATIONAL GUARD TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF AN EX-SERVICE MAN. THE PAY OF THE MEMBERS OF SUCH FIRING SQUAD TO BE AS PRESCRIBED BY LAW AND TO BE PAID FROM FUNDS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL FOR THE PAY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.

In some of our inland cities it is impossible together together a sufficient firing squad on the occasion of the death of an ex-service man, so this is incorporated to take care of such cases. Down at the coast we can always call on the regular army. So the Adjutant General can, when ordered by the Commander of The American Legion, or Mayor of a city, furnish

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a firing squad from the National Guard at a very small expense, and we think it perfectly proper.

MR. TROLAND:

Do you think Section 38 ought to be mandatory on the Adjutant General? Suppose a request was made from some quite remote place? Under the language here he would have to do it just the same. For instance, in Tolland County.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I talked that situation over with the Adjutant General and we decided between ourselves and there is no place in Connecticut so remote but that the telephone would reach the Adjutant General and he could get the firing squad.

MR. TROLAND:

Some places are quite remote. Don't you think it ought to be "the Adjutant General MAY order"?

GENERAL COLE:

When first the matter was brought up General Payne and I talked it over, and the plan we laid out was to have the Captain of each company have it in mind all the time so he would be ready to send at least four men.

MR. TROLAND:

Mr. Byrne would like to speak on the Armory Bill.

MR. BYRNE (STATE BANK COMMISSIONER):

Bill 656, regarding salaries, I am in favor of the bill as it is.

GENERAL PAYNE:

There is no objection on my part or that of the National Guard to make that "MAY order", but I would like to see it mandatory and make the Adjutant General responsible for a firing squad.

SECTION 39 is changed to add "naval militia".

SECTIONS 41, 44 and 47 are changed to add "naval militia".

The Naval Militia has a little different classification of Court Martial than the National Guard, but notwithstanding that they desire to be included in the state law, so we have added, you will note in the last of SECTION 47:

COURTS MARTIAL IN THE NAVAL MILITIA, NOT IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES, SHALL BE OF THREE KINDS; GENERAL COURTS MARTIAL, SUMMARY COURTS MARTIAL AND DECK COURTS, which compare with our general Courts, Special Courts and summary Courts. Exactly the same only different names.

SECTION 69 seems to be a rather important section to us. We talked about that in Armory Board meetings and we have written this paragraph:

THE ARMORY BOARD WILL PREPARE AND SUBMIT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AN ARMORY CONSTRUCTION OR PURCHASE PROGRAM WHICH SHALL BE CONSIDERED THE POLICY OF THE STATE AND SHALL BE THE BASIS FOR ESTABLISHING PRIORITY IN

THE APPROPRIATION OF STATE MONEY FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION OR THE PURCHASE OF ARMORIES, BUILDINGS, OR LAND FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. THE ARMORY BOARD CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE GOVERNOR ON OR BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF JANUARY, 1927, AND EACH TWO YEARS THEREAFTER. A COPY OF SAID REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THEIR GUIDANCE.

The meaning of that is obvious. It will eliminate coming before the General Assembly for armories throughout the state and it will give the Appropriations Committee something to work on. No one knows the necessity of armories throughout the state any better than the National Guard. Nobody knows the age of the armories, or the requirements, and a recommendation from senior officers of the National Guard should have some weight. It is not expected it will be followed implicitly but we expect it will be recognized as their opinion. If someone comes and asks for an armory we expect our word will be taken for it. We have studied the situation and know what armories we have, the age of the armories and which should have priority. Something for the Military Committee and the Appropriations Committee to work on.

MR. TROLAND:

Referring to Section 41 regarding long service medal. Another bill was heard today on the long service medal. A bill offered by Senator Hall.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I do not think a man in the organized reserves should be entitled to consideration as far as service is concerned.

SENATOR WILDER:

I tried to make that point but I was too ignorant of the terms.

GENERAL PAYNE:

A man in the organized reserves does not give a bit of service.

SENATOR WILDER:

We see every day where the Adjutant General has placed Captain So-and-so in the reserves. They don't do anything.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I have no brief for the National Guard or Reserves so far as this is concerned, but I believe the National Guard is giving far greater service than the Reserve Corps, and if the State of Connecticut is going to give long service medals it should be to the National Guard.

MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE:

That bill is merely for the completion of one service bar. If a man had a portion towards a service medal he could fill that out and that's all.

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GENERAL PAYNE:

A man serving a great many years and lacking only a short time to get a service bar should get it.

MR. DELAMATER:

Have you thought of issuing a ribbon with the long service medal? The same as we get with other decorations so that a man could wear it on his coat when he didn't want to wear the dangle? A bronze star for ten and a silver star for fifteen.

GENERAL PAYNE:

We cannot wear any campaign badges with state decorations.

MR. DELAMATER:

Some men in the National Guard haven't any campaign ribbons. That is merely a thought. Because with all the other decorations a ribbon goes with them.

GENERAL PAYNE:

It might be more economical than gold badges.

MR. DELAMATER:

The extra cost would be very small. You know what I mean, General?

GENERAL COLE:

Yes, I do.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I believe if the committee decides favorably regarding trap shooting that might be incorporated in this law. I think the National Guard are in favoring of Sunday shooting. A great many men cannot give the time any

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other time except Sunday, and trap shooting cannot be any worse than firing the service rifle. All the more experience we get in shooting the better off we are.

MR. TROLAND:

While all the Military Departments are represented, I wonder if the thought had occurred to anybody that the Military Department or the General Assembly should honor Connecticut's representative in the first round-the-world flight in any way.

GENERAL PAYNE:

Hadn't thought about it but think it would be very nice.

MR. TROLAND:

I think he is the only representative of the State of Connecticut who flew round the world. I had not talked it over with anyone but I wondered if you were prepared to give any curbstone opinion as to whether you think it would be advisable.

GENERAL PAYNE:

Wouldn't it be better to introduce a simple resolution into the General Assembly? I think it would be appreciated more than anything else. He is loaded with gold watches and everything. He is a mighty fine young fellow and a boy you would all like. He would appreciate it a lot.

SENATOR DOTY:

Anyone else in favor of the bill? Any questions?

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MR. DELAMATER:

General Cole, don't you want to say something about the thing in general ?

GENERAL COLE:

As you all know, General Payne and myself have gone over this very carefully. The bulk of these amendments are more or less the correction of the statute law in regard to the naval militia. I understand that just before the closing days of Congress they passed an act which brings the naval militia in the same status as does the Defense Act of the National Guardsmen. It recognizes the force organized as the naval militia and gives them the same privileges accorded the National Guardsmen. This body having gone on record as to it being desirable that the naval militia become a part, we felt it quite proper that the law be changed in every respect so as to recognize the naval militia.

SENATOR WILDER:

Couldn't that be done by a short act of about twenty lines or so ?

GENERAL COLE:

In going over this we thought it better be this way, knowing if there was any way of cutting it down you would know better. You must have it incorporated in the law when you get through just as it is there.

GENERAL PAYNE:

We do not extend to the warrant officers of the Navy the same as the warrant officers of the National Guard. As far as the uniform allowance is concerned we do not extend the same privileges.

SENATOR WILDER:

You and Mr. Troland are in the same town. I suggest that you two get together and cut out part of this.

SENATOR DOTY:

Anyone else in favor ?

MR. LEONARD HEALEY, SECRETARY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

That part of the bill in which we would be interested is found on sheet 6, I think. It refers to the use of armories by agricultural and other associations. In recent years our relations with the military authorities, as far as the use of the armory is concerned, has been very pleasant indeed. My memory takes me back to the time when we secured the use of the armory with some difficulty. Evidently they didn't know the agricultural people. Since they have come to know them the associations have been very pleasant. There is a phase here which I called Colonel Bissell's attention to:

"In all cases when admission shall be charged a surety bond, approved by the armory board, shall be furnished".

At this last exposition there was a question in the minds of the committee whether to charge admission or have admission free. From my point of view, and the

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point of view of all associations is we would prefer to have that bond made compulsory whether admission is paid or not.

GENERAL PAYNE:

No objection to that.

SENATOR WILDER:

Perhaps in times past they took exception to mixing chickens and soldiers.

GENERAL COLE:

That bond is to take care of anybody getting injured or anything like that.

SENATOR DOTY:

We can drop out "where admission is charged".

JUDGE SYKES, OF SUFFIELD (A member of the State Grange):

I want to second all the remarks of the Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, especially in regard to the military gentlemen who have been so kind to give us the use of the armory. We knew it was a big thing for the farmers to come into this big armory, and we surely appreciate it from the gentlemen who had it in charge..

GENERAL PAYNE:

This military rental business is getting to be a serious thing with the Military Department. We had 254 rentals during the past year and 200 were charged less than the full rental. It is getting to a stage where we have to cut out practically all

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other rentals except those by military companies, agricultural societies and state aided organizations. Practically all hospitals are state aided. And there are charitable organizations. We are perfectly willing to give them the benefit of the reduced rental. We want to give the agricultural societies the benefit of the armory because it is educational and there are no places in the cities. We had a request today from Torrington for the use of the armory six weeks six nights a week to hold revival services. It is a rather impossible request and at the same time we want to give it to them. But we want our military organizations to have an opportunity to play basket-ball and work on the floors. When we enlist a man in the National Guard we offer certain inducements and I don't know what we are going to do two years from now. The outside organizations are coming in so strong with requests, and it seems impossible to refuse them, and we do want to take care of the agricultural organizations and such other state organizations who have a right to go into the armory.

MR. ENGLISH:

Regarding SECTION 36, in what status does that leave the warrant officer. He does draw his uniform.

GENERAL COLE:

They have a commissioned officer's status.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I was under the impression the warrant officer of the Navy drew his uniform the same as a petty officer.

MR. ENGLISH:

He has practically all the rights of the commissioned officer, separate mess and separate allowances, but he is the top grade of the enlisted man working up.

GENERAL PAYNE:

I suggest to the committee, then, that they include the warrant officer.

MR. ENGLISH:

You were thinking of the petty officer.

GENERAL PAYNE:

Then I would suggest that you refer that to Colonel Troland, too, because I thought the warrant officer was an enlisted man, mHe should have the allowances, then, of a commissioned officer. Give them a moderate allowance for uniform.

SENATOR DOTY:

Anyone else in favor of the bill? Any opposition? Any questions any members would like to ask? Then the hearing is closed.