

HOUSE . . . . No. 138

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, BOSTON, December 7, 1932.

*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives.*

In compliance with General Laws, chapter 30, section 33, I have the honor to submit herewith such portions of my annual reports (Pub. Docs. Nos. 43 and 46) as embody recommendations for legislation, accompanied by drafts of proposals and bills to cover said recommendations.

FREDERIC W. COOK,

*Secretary of the Commonwealth.*

RECOMMENDATIONS.

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1. Article XLV of the Amendments to the Constitution provides that "The general court shall have power to provide by law for voting by qualified voters of the commonwealth who, at the time of an election, are absent from the city or town of which they are inhabitants in the choice of any officer to be elected or upon any question submitted at such election." Because of the large number of applications preceding the last election, and with the conviction that this privilege should be extended to unfortunates deprived of the right to vote because of physical disability, I respectfully renew the recommendation which I have several times made to the General Court, that the provisions of said article be extended to include qualified voters who, by reason of physical disability, are unable to cast their votes at the polling place in person.

2. Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution, General Provisions, III, Form of Ballot, provides for the form in which questions relating to amendment to the Constitution or laws submitted to the people shall be printed on the ballot. Under the present law the Attorney General has not authority to condense these questions. It is my belief that such authority should be given in order that questions on the ballot may be more briefly expressed. I therefore recommend an amendment to that part of the Constitution above mentioned by inserting after the words "attorney general" in the third line the words:— or by the title of such amendment or law if in his opinion such title is sufficient.

3. General Laws, chapter 54, section 135, provides for State-wide recounts of votes following a State election. The time for submitting to registrars of voters

petitions for such recounts is on or before the twelfth day following such election. This day falls on a Sunday and I recommend changing the date to the tenth day.

There is no provision for withdrawal of such petitions for recount and I recommend that such provision be made.

4. It is frequently necessary for city and town clerks to furnish authentication of documents signed by them, but no authority appears in the law which would cover it. I therefore recommend legislation to require the filing in the office of the Secretary of a certificate of the election or appointment of a city or town clerk and the authorization for the State Secretary to authenticate a document or record signed by a city or town clerk.

