

**HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 1160. REPORT OF  
THE JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO REVISE,  
CONSOLIDATE AND ARRANGE THE  
GENERAL LAWS OF THE COMMONWEALTH  
RELATING TO THE OBSERVANCE OF THE  
LORD'S DAY. FEBRUARY, 1907**

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# VARIOUS

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REPORT <sup>cf</sup>

*Massachusetts General Court*

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE

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TO

REVISE, CONSOLIDATE AND ARRANGE THE  
GENERAL LAWS OF THE COMMON-  
WEALTH RELATING TO THE

OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S DAY.]

FEBRUARY, 1907.

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JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LORD'S DAY LAWS.

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JOHN E. DANIELS, *Clerk*.

Suttons, Nov 11-79





# Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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## REPORT

OF THE

## JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE

TO REVISE, CONSOLIDATE AND ARRANGE THE GENERAL LAWS OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH RELATING TO THE OBSERVANCE  
OF THE LORD'S DAY.

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*To the Honorable the Senate and the House of Representatives.*

The committee were appointed under the following joint order of the General Court of the year 1906:—

*Ordered,* That a joint special committee, to consist of two members of the Senate and five members of the House, be appointed to sit during the recess of the General Court, to revise, consolidate and arrange the general laws of the Commonwealth relating to the observance of the Lord's Day, and to consider the expediency of such legislation in amendment thereof and in addition thereto as they may deem advisable. They shall have authority to employ assistance, and their necessary expenses, so far as approved by the Governor and Council, together with such compensation to the members as shall be determined by the Governor and Council, shall be paid from time to time from the treasury of the Commonwealth. Said committee shall report to the General Court on or before the second Wednesday of January, 1907, with such recommendations for legislation as they may deem expedient or desirable.

It was also further —

*Ordered*, That the joint special committee to be appointed to sit during the recess of the General Court to revise, consolidate and arrange the general laws of the Commonwealth relating to the observance of the Lord's Day, and to consider the expediency of such legislation in amendment thereof and in addition thereto as the committee may deem advisable, is hereby authorized and directed to consider the expediency of such amendment of the general laws now in force as shall permit seamen and other persons in the naval service of the United States to engage in athletic sports and games on Evans Field in the town of Provincetown, on the Lord's Day.

The above order, the scope of which is broad and comprehensive, delegated to the committee a most important commission, and sought the solution of a problem whose difficulties have increased in proportion to the complexity of modern living and of modern thought. It is doubtful if any other one question than this, the observance of the Lord's Day, or Sunday, has aroused such varied and widely differing expressions of opinion. The day was instituted as a period of rest from labor, apparently for wise hygienic reasons and as a memorial of freedom from bondage; but even in this respect minds differ, and conscientious persons are in disagreement. The purpose of the day was, that all should be free upon it, — free to worship, free to rest, free to secure physical and mental refreshment. The law has guaranteed to all that freedom. How shall it be exercised? "No such conditions ever existed before as are now found in our rapidly enlarging cities and towns," says the report on Sunday labor, issued by the Bureau of Statistics of Labor. "What shall be done for those to whom Sunday affords the only leisure? This is a social question. There are others which are personal. Does rest for me involve an increased burden to others? Having obtained leisure for myself, shall I use it so as to narrow the leisure of others? What is the best use of Sunday leisure? To answer these questions or others that at once arise takes us from the domain of fact to that of theory. The facts are perfectly obvious. Merely to state them may remind us how far we have moved from the

simple social life of a former time. The moral and physical aspects of the problem are inextricably blended.”

At nearly all the public hearings arguments were advanced on purely theological ground, and that many of the things now permitted or tolerated are forbidden by express Divine commands. The committee do not enter on that ground.

The committee have given themselves to the task since their organization on July 6, 1906, and now feel that further time for the consideration of this important and far-reaching subject might well have been employed. The committee would have been glad of a longer extension of time, but they have endeavored to shape their work to the conditions, and respectfully submit the following report.