

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS AND RESOLVES  
AS PASSED BY THE  
Ninetieth and Ninety-first  
Legislatures  
OF THE  
STATE OF MAINE  
From April 26, 1941 to April 9, 1943  
AND MISCELLANEOUS STATE PAPERS

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Published by the Revisor of Statutes in accordance  
with the Resolves of the Legislature approved June  
28, 1820, March 18, 1840, March 16, 1842, and Acts  
approved August 6, 1930 and April 2, 1931.

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KENNEBEC JOURNAL  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
1943

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War Message

of

Gov. Sumner Sewall

to

SPECIAL SESSION

of the

90TH MAINE LEGISLATURE

January 12, 1942

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## WAR MESSAGE

We are assembled here today to face problems caused by the war in which our Country is now engaged. Inconceivable as it may seem, the lives of our citizens are in danger and the public safety is threatened by our enemies.

In previous wars, enemy action has been directed almost wholly against the armed forces. In this war our civilian population, our cities, our homes, our factories, our total productive facilities are true objectives of attack. Military defense in this war is therefore not sufficient. Total defense for total war means the complete organization of our civil as well as military resources.

### Civilian Defense to the Present

We of Maine were among the first to recognize this new and vital truth. During the past several months our state, county and municipal governments have worked diligently within the limits of their statutory powers to prepare a structure for civilian defense. Our citizens have given liberally of their time and money to the prosecution of this work.

Today some four thousand of our men and women are volunteer members of the Maine Civilian Defense force. All are either trained or being trained for vital work in the protection of our people and the resources of our State.

Law enforcement agencies have been strengthened by police reserves. Special deputies have been added to our sheriff forces. Our state wardens are undertaking wide programs for civilian defense. One thousand members of the American Legion have individually pledged to serve as auxiliary officers under sheriffs and municipal police. All are being instructed in war police duty and in fighting sabotage.

Valuable work has been done to coordinate and expand our many fire departments and train them for the handling of incendiary bombs and fires of disaster proportions. Disaster relief committees have been set up in most of our communities and are preparing for action which we hope will never be necessary, but for which we must be ready.

More recently, our efforts have been concentrated on the development of air raid warning, blackout and warden services. These are the great protective services which must go into instant action at a given signal from

the Army. Instruction of appointed personnel in these very vital services is now being given in communities throughout the state by volunteer teachers from our high schools and colleges. In this way we will achieve a uniformly high standard of training and understanding of the duties involved.

The Army has ordered the immediate establishment of a system of report centers to warn of the approach of enemy aircraft. Under this plan the State must maintain some twenty district warning centers. Local report centers will be operated by our cities and towns. All must be manned by our forces of civilian defense, trained in warning routine and the meaning of the colored signal light which is part of the system.

It takes time and work and money to build and train such an organization. Each member must know what to do on the yellow, the blue, the red and the white light. Each must react instantly with discipline. Numbers are not so important as training. In the event of attack we must have a civilian army, not a mob.

The intricate and delicate operating procedures for effective and safe blackouts have been given study and attention. Air raid drills should be tried at some early date to test the program and to familiarize us all with our duties in the event of a real attack.

People do not fear that with which they are familiar. Broad public knowledge of bombs, their effect and methods to combat them, is therefore essential for the morale of our citizens. Panic and confusion can be made more disastrous than the destruction by bombs. We must all therefore learn some of the fundamentals of war and be prepared without further delay.

Means for supplementing and utilizing all law enforcement and fire protection agencies for the maintenance of order and successful prosecution of the war are necessary. Additional powers are needed for cities and towns so that they may appropriate money for these services.

### **Civilian Defense of the Future**

The time has now arrived when we must recognize the effort and strengthen the effectiveness of this entire civilian defense group. We must give it the backing of statutory power, provide it with authority and finance it adequately for the tremendous duties which it is undertaking as an agency of government essential to our public safety and welfare during the period of the war.

In addition to these recommendations, it has been proposed that broad

powers be vested in the Governor to mobilize the total human and material resources of the State, when, in his judgment, and that of the council such action is essential to the defense of our people. These are not powers which any individual living in a democracy would or should desire. They would impose responsibilities more grave than could be justified by any but the direst emergency.

But you, and I, and the people of Maine, know that these are days of ruthless conquest. Nightmares can become realities. War knows no law except that of self-preservation.

War moves fast. War strikes hard. War must be met on equal terms.

For the moment, Winter on and over the North Atlantic is a mighty bulwark of defense. Soon our own defenses must be ready. Time is the one resource we cannot spare.

In the event it is your considered judgment that broad powers should be vested by law in the Executive, it would, in turn, be my most solemn pledge that the authority would neither be lightly used nor in any way drawn upon without first exhausting all other possible courses of action.

Let me make it clear to you that these powers are not sought by me. We must, however, face the issue. It is for you to determine whether these powers are demanded by the perils of the times. It is for you to judge whether they will aid in achieving our common aim of a strong defense for our homes, our children and our State.

#### Needs of State Government

As the only state-wide law enforcement group, the State Police constitutes the coordinating agency for the law enforcement effort of the civilian defense program. With a current strength of ninety-two officers and men, the long felt need for enlargement of the State Police force now becomes essential. I, therefore, recommend that authority be granted to increase this force by an additional fifty men.

The impact of the defense program on the living cost and duties of State employees requires, in all fairness, an adjustment of salary schedules now prevailing. Higher salaries in defense industries have attracted many of our employees to leave State service. This constant turnover in personnel tends to decrease the efficiency of our government and is costly to the people. Bills calling for temporary increases to meet this emergency have therefore been prepared and will be presented for consideration. I urge their passage.

You will recall that we were agreed, when we last met in the regular session, that a contributory pension law for retirement of State employees

was sound, progressive and desirable. At that time provision could not be made to finance this measure. I now recommend that this bill be enacted.

Although there is every indication that Federal rationing regulation will sharply curtail automobile travel by State employees, I believe that a modification of the mileage allowance should be made at this time to meet increased travel costs. A bill to eliminate the three-cents-a-mile bracket now in force in the state travel allowance schedule will be submitted for your consideration.

Certain other situations requiring immediate attention of the Legislature have been encountered since your adjournment last April. Bills have therefore been discussed with your Recess Committee; governing the sardine packing season; setting the legal length of lobsters; providing for aid to municipalities for maintenance and snow clearance of airports; extending resident rates for hunting and fishing fees to members of the armed forces of the United States; safeguarding revenues of the State Liquor Commission; providing for appropriations and departmental adjustments made necessary by the war; changing the name of the Maine Nautical School to meet requirements for Federal recognition; clarifying certain tax laws in order to safeguard present revenues; and improving certain military laws.

In preparing the defense program outlined in this message, careful thought has been given to the additional costs that we might reasonably be expected to incur.

To finance the temporary salary increases for State employees, \$230,000 annually would be required from general funds and \$140,000 from highway and other special funds set up by law.

The contributory retirement law would require approximately \$250,000 per year, little of which will be needed in this fiscal year in view of the time necessary to put the law into operation.

The expansion of the State Police will call for an expenditure of \$75,000 annually from general funds, and an equal amount from the Highway fund.

Adjustment of the state travel allowance schedule would draw \$30,000 annually from general funds.

In summary then, this program contemplates an annual increased expenditure from general funds of \$585,000. With less than six months remaining, our requirements for this fiscal year naturally will be proportionately less than this figure, even taking into consideration an item of \$40,000 representing legislative expense not provided for at the regular session.

### No New Taxes

It is my opinion, and that of your Commissioner of Finance, that no new taxes will be required to finance this program.

Administrative expense and relief payments are currently running at a rate which indicates a saving of \$300,000 annually below appropriations available for these purposes. Revenues are currently running at a rate which indicates an increase of \$700,000 annually over our earlier estimates.

Approximately \$1,000,000, which was not anticipated when the budget was prepared and accepted by the Legislature, is now definitely estimated to be available annually for the purposes of this program. It is my judgment that no better investment of these hard won savings can be made than by pledging them toward the security of our people in this defense program.

We have been prudent in the administration of state affairs. We have been conservative in estimating receipts. We have been fortunate in enjoying improved economic conditions. Now is the time to give to the people the benefit of these governmental savings and to relieve them of the burden of the fear of increased taxation by the State.

After providing for the expansion of ordinary state activities to meet the current emergency demands, there will be an estimated balance of \$700,000 with which to meet the extraordinary cost of the civilian defense program for the present fiscal year, and an estimated \$400,000 for the second year of the biennium. With the enactment of the defense bill, these funds will become available for the purposes of this act.

What the cost of our defense program will be, no person can now predict with accuracy. It is possible that the above amounts may be adequate. It is virtually certain, however, that this sum, supported by authority to issue bonds up to a similar amount, will insure us against any emergencies at present conceivable.

For this reason, a bill authorizing the issuance of war bonds to a total of \$1,000,000 will be submitted for your consideration. If it proves necessary to issue these bonds, provision is made for their amortization and retirement from current revenues over a ten year period.

A year ago you and I solemnly pledged that we would do all within our power to protect the people of Maine, their homes, their children, their institutions and their resources.

May God now give us guidance and wisdom in carrying out this pledge.

SUMNER SEWALL,  
Governor.