

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSIONS

A. D. 1842.

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1842.

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE.

NO. 43.]

[HOUSE.

REPORT AND RESOLVES

IN RELATION TO

F O R T I F I C A T I O N S .

[WM. R. SMITH & Co.....Printers to the State.]

STATE OF MAINE.

THE Maritime and Frontier Committee, having been directed to enquire into the expediency of presenting to the consideration of Congress the exposed and defenceless condition of the extensive seacoast and inland frontier of Maine, and of urging upon our National government the importance of immediate appropriations for the erection of fortifications in this State, submit the following

REPORT:

One of the great objects of the establishment of our National government was to provide for the common defence of the States of the Union. It was for this purpose that the power to raise and support armies, to provide and maintain a navy, to erect military fortifications for our coast and inland frontier, and to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises for such objects was confided to Congress.

Though the policy of our republic is to cultivate peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, to avoid entangling alliances, to quell the first promptings of an ambitious spirit of aggrandizement

by foreign conquest, and to encourage the development of the inexhaustible resources of our vast country by stimulating our citizens to an industrious devotion to agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the mechanic arts, the time has not yet arrived when the sword may be converted into the ploughshare. To secure the respect of foreign governments, to protect our rights abroad and our liberties at home, to maintain that peaceful policy in which lies our true greatness, and which is our true path to glory, the United States must shew to the world that they have the power to sustain the rank which they have assumed among the nations of the earth.

The duty of providing for the common defence imposed by the constitution upon our National Legislature should never be neglected ; and, least of all, should a spirit of apathy upon this subject prevail at a time when the British government, having surrounded our frontier with her military posts, and the islands of the ocean convenient to our coast with her naval depots and armaments, is pursuing a relentless course of encroachment on our territory and aggression on our rights, with an ambition illimitable in its extent and unscrupulous in its means.

The geographical situation of our State, its exposed and defenceless condition, and its peculiar relation to the controversy between the National government and Great Britain, marking it out in the event of a war as the object of the signal vengeance

of an embittered foe, render this subject one of deep interest to our citizens.

With the exception of her western boundary, Maine is surrounded by the possessions of a foreign power and the ocean. She has an exposed seaboard of three hundred miles in extent and four hundred miles of unfortified inland frontier. Her interior is accessible to an enemy through her large navigable rivers. Her principal seaports and many of the cities, towns and villages which adorn the banks of her fine inland waters are within a few hours sail of a great naval and military arsenal of one of the most powerful and least friendly of the European powers.

The great interests of Maine—her foreign commerce—her coasting trade—her fisheries—her shipbuilding—her manufacturing and agricultural industry—are equally exposed with her territory and have assumed a magnitude not to be overlooked.

Maine is the first ship building State in the Union, second in the extent of her fisheries, third in the amount of her tonnage, seventh in commercial imports, ninth in commercial exports. The products of her agricultural industry, including the raising of stock and of wool, are immense. The growth of her forests is a vast source of wealth to her. Her investments in manufactures and the various branches of industry are constantly increasing. Her population is advancing rapidly. Her industry and enter-

prise, combined with her natural advantages, are pushing her forward in a career of unexampled prosperity. A reference to her statistics will show that this is no exaggerated statement.

To provide the necessary means of defence for the valuable territory and various and growing interests of our State, she must look to the general government, which she invested with that power upon entering the Union, relying implicitly on its faith, its honor, and its written compact.

And what has been done for Maine? While several millions have been expended in some of the States she has received a few thousands of dollars of the bounty of the nation. Two or three dilapidated forts, situated at Portland and Eastport, with a stockade and a few barracks at Houlton, are the only evidences our State affords of the guardian care and protection which the constitutional compact of the Union guaranties to us.

Nor is the feeling of dissatisfaction at such neglect diminished by the humiliating consideration that a portion of the territory of this State is even now permitted to remain under the usurped jurisdiction of the British government.

Against this apathy and coldness, this accumulation of wrongs, Maine has raised the voice of remonstrance year after year, but her appeals to the sense of duty and justice of the general government have been heard with the most philosophical unconcern.

A glance at the map of the State will exhibit to the most careless eye the important points for the erection of defences. Some of our spacious harbors should be rendered safe retreats for our merchant and coasting vessels in the time of war and for prizes captured from an enemy. The mouths of our great rivers should be so fortified as to forbid the entrance of a hostile fleet to the flourishing settlements upon their banks. Our eastern frontier should be provided with forts, at suitable points, from Calais to Mars Hill, connected by a military road. The necessity and importance of these defences is fully shewn in the revised report of the board of engineers on the defence of the seaboard, made to the War department of the United States under the date of March 24th, 1836, and the report from the secretary of war in compliance with a resolution of the United States senate in reference to the defence of the frontier of Maine, under the date of December 21st, 1838.

With this brief expression of their views, your committee suggest the propriety of calling the attention of Congress to their constitutional obligations upon this subject in a respectful but firm and decided manner, indicative that this State deeply feels her wrongs and cannot quietly longer submit to delay in redressing them, and offer the accompanying resolves.

JESSE SMART, *Chairman.*

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVES relating to the defence of the seacoast
and inland frontier of the State of Maine.

RESOLVED, that the exposed situation of the
2 frontier and extensive coast of Maine—her large
3 and increasing investments in agriculture, man-
4 ufactures and commerce—the fact that a large
5 portion of her territory is claimed by a foreign
6 power, and that her seaboard will be “the out-
7 ward wall upon which the American standard
8 will be first raised in the event of war”—justify
9 the State in again calling the attention of Con-
10 gress to the subject, and demanding of them in
11 the exercise of their constitutional power and
12 duty “to provide for the common defence,” im-
13 mediate and adequate appropriations for the
14 defence of the State of Maine.

RESOLVED, That our Senators be instructed
2 and our Representatives be requested to enforce

3 upon Congress in every constitutional mode the
4 necessity and importance of immediate appro-
5 priations for the purpose mentioned in the fore-
6 going resolve.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
March 10, 1842. }

500 copies of the foregoing Report and Resolves were ordered
to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

Attest.

WM. T. JOHNSON, *Clerk.*