

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1849.



Augusta:

WM. T. JOHNSON;.....PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1850.

REPORT  
OF THE  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
OF THE  
MILITIA OF MAINE,  
MAY 1, 1849.

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Published agreeably to Resolve of March 22, 1836.

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# STATE OF MAINE.

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ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE, }  
Augusta, May 8, 1849. }

To His Excellency, JOHN W. DANA,  
*Governor and Commander-in-Chief.*

SIR :—It was the pleasure of the Legislature of 1844, to make essential alterations in the militia laws of this State. The burdens of the former system were lightened, but the effective force of the militia was vitally impaired. The right arm of the public defense was stricken down and palsied.

Time enough had not elapsed prior to the enactment of the last Legislature, fully to develop the effect or demonstrate the policy of the alteration. It was but an experiment. It required the test, not of two or three favored summers, but that of many changeful years ; for it was to affect other generations, by abridging the very means which the wisdom of the past had provided for the security of our Republic, and the perpetuity of the noble institutions which it had fostered. Sufficient however was seen and felt of the immediate and paralyzing effects of the act, to render it generally obnoxious and wholly inoperative.

Men, who had ever been distinguished for their military spirit and patriotism, became discouraged and disgusted, and instead of contributing to the maintenance of an organization under what they regarded a soulless system, their whole influence was turned against it, and directed to its overthrow, and the entire disbandment of the militia of the State. Their efforts were signally successful. From that period to the present, no military service has been performed in the State, and no returns of the militia have been made to the office of the Adjutant General.

So general and decided had become the impression that the public safety and the faithful execution of the laws required some sort of a military organization, that a new system was enacted at the last session of the Legislature, providing for a volunteer corps, not to exceed ten thousand men, to be furnished with arms by the State, and required to perform annually two-and-a-half days' service. The new law provides also for the enrollment of the whole military force of the State by the assessors of cities, towns and plantations, and the annual return of the same to the office of the Adjutant General, in the months of May or June. This system substituted the voluntary for the compulsory service. No pecuniary inducement is offered either to the soldier or officer. The appeal is made directly and solely to the patriotic impulses of our young men. The response that will be given materially depends upon the measures that may hereafter be adopted by the Legislature. Should they be favorable, it is my judgment the law will be sustained by the people of the State, and a respectable organization will grow up under its provisions. Twelve companies, several of them quite large, have already petitioned

for organization. Others are being raised in different parts of the State.

A military spirit is beginning to be revived among our citizens, which if not checked but favored, by legislative action, is sure to extend and strengthen, and eventually to furnish a corps of independent soldiery, honorable to the State, and equal to any emergency.

It will be shown that the mere legislative sanction of the performance of military service is regarded by the citizens of a free state as a valuable privilege. The constitutional right guarantied to every citizen of a republic, of holding and bearing arms, should ever be esteemed as one of the dearest rights of freemen. It should be cherished as sacredly as that of the ballot-box ; for it is the enjoyment of this right that distinguishes a free government from a despotism, and gives to it its strength and perpetuity.

An organized militia, embracing so large a portion, was established as a guaranty for the liberty of the people in every contingency, and in every period. It was always known that this invaluable guaranty required sacrifices on the part of the soldier ; but they were considered necessary. So thought the fathers of our republic—so have thought many great and good men, up to the present time.

Some benevolent minds, however, are fondly supposing that wars may henceforth be avoided, and that, therefore, no preparations should be made for meeting them. It may be, they forget that one object of the preparation is to deter nations from war. It delights us all, to look forward to that predicted day when peace and righteousness shall pervade the earth. But that

bright vision can be referred only to some age yet distant in the future. If that event were possible at this moment, the glad notes of jubilee would swell from every heart. Such a problem has not yet been demonstrated ; such a result seems far off. Philanthropists desire it ; theorists have long been foretelling its approach ; yet even to-day torrents of blood are flowing in the conflict of nations. And who can count the wars and rebellions which are hereafter to devastate the world ?

International congresses, arbitrations, mediations and treaties have been urged as specifics for averting war. Thus far, this benevolent design has been accomplished but in part. Let us hope for the future. We respect the men who are so humanely employed, and shall rejoice when they lay the key-stone in the temple of peace. But in the meantime nations are infringing upon nations, and the injured discover neither the safety nor the duty of submitting, until the friends of universal peace shall have elaborated their glorious work. It is, however, to be feared that when they have exhausted all their resources, much will be left for the ball and the bayonet to accomplish.

Again, there are men who hold the evils of war to be so great that no nation can be justified in being a party to any war ; and that, therefore, no preparation should be made for it.

War is indeed an evil of appalling magnitude ; but there may be an evil still greater. It is that of a nation humiliated in seeing its soil invaded, and its institutions subverted by a foreign foe ; the lives, property and pursuits of its citizens tamely subjected to the inroads of pirates, marauders and buccanneers, whether as individu-



al adventurers, or under the authority of some insolent and lawless nation. The evils of war are as dust in the balance, when compared with the calamities involved in the subversion of civil and religious liberty.

For an administration, intrusted with adequate power, and charged with the duty of transmitting the national rights and national glories to the distant future—for such an administration to suffer those inroads and those humiliations, would be worse than weakness; it would be the darkest of moral treasons.

Civil government is of divine origin; it is the principal means of upholding the human family. Upon its existence depend, in a great measure, the morals and happiness of the race. It is a trust for the benefit not only of the present, but of coming generations. That trust involves a duty. No trust, no duty on earth is more solemn. It must never be violated;—it is to be exerted both to repel and redress outrage; for redress secures against future aggression.

War is the highest court of nations; it is to them what judicial courts and penitentiaries are to individuals. All these things are evils, but they are necessary evils.

The human family even in this advanced age finds no remedy for the evil of national aggression, but that of war with all its horrors. True, it is a terrific remedy. It should ever be the last resort,—but no other tribunal is effective. Before what other tribunal will your government bring an offending nation? To what prison will you commit him? Will he go there unless your government send a force to carry him? But that very sending is an act of war.

The navy is one of the auxiliaries of war. Its object

is the same with that of an organized militia. The security of American rights is the object of both. It seems a little wonderful that the *naval* service has so slightly alarmed the delicate sensitiveness which shudders so much when national indignities are repelled by the only mode which has ever been found effectual.

The necessity of war has thus far had the sanction of the people. We all glory in the revolution which elevated us to a rank among the nations. The two subsequent wars became duties. To the first of them has long since been awarded the highest approval, and to the last the people have put their most significant seal. And yet the election of one of its most influential and effective captains to the presidency, is but one of the many decisive testimonials in favor of the war.

War is ever to be deplored. All do deplore it. The mourning enthusiast or the sighing politician, who so loudly declaims against the atrocities of war, may fancy there is some peculiarity in his philanthropy or some superior tenderness in his conscience. But is not this a mistake? Is it not a mere illusion? He feels the evil only as those others do, who, while they deplore the occasion, feel the sterner and higher duty of sustaining any war, to which the nation is driven for the security of its existence or its essential rights.

This is the principle of patriotism. It is the principle which works out for the human race, benefits vastly more precious and ennobling than that peculiar sensibility which sickens at the far-reaching economy of providing, in time of peace, for the contingency of war.

I have said thus much upon the subject of war, and perhaps more than may seem legitimately within the

province of a report from this department. My only apology is, that the views I have presented are the result of my honest convictions, and appear justified by the condition of things that have existed in our own state for the last five years.

I will merely add, that according to the provision of the present law, I have forwarded blanks to the assessors and clerks of all the cities, towns and plantations in the State, and that returns of the enrollment of the military force of the state, are now being made to this department.

The state has received of the general government within the last year, 940 percussion rifles of the most approved model, being her quota of arms for the years 1846, 1847 and 1848. The same description of arms will be ordered for the quota of this state for the year 1849.

I have the honor to remain,

With the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

ALFRED REDINGTON,

*Adjutant General.*