

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF

THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1861.



AUGUSTA:
STEVENS & SAYWARD, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.
1861.

ADDRESS

OF

GOVERNOR WASHBURN

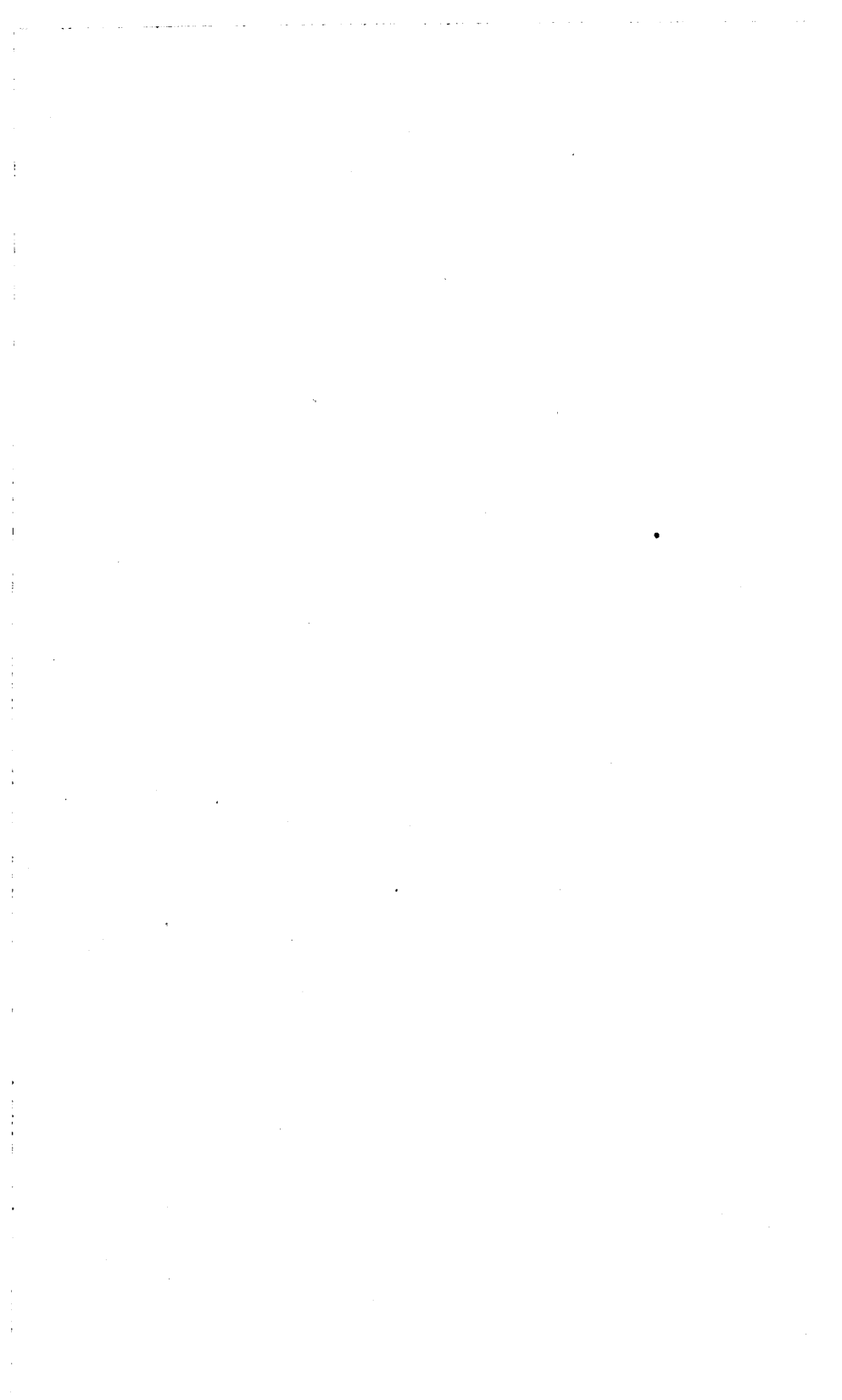
TO THE LEGISLATURE OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

APRIL 22, 1861.

Printed by order of the Legislature.

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ADDRESS.

*Gentlemen of the Senate
and House of Representatives :*

Our faithful and patriotic Commonwealth, in the month of January last, speaking by the unanimous voice of her representatives in both branches of the Legislature, authorized and requested me "to assure the President of the United States of the loyalty of the people of Maine to the Union and the government thereof, and that the entire resources of the State in men and money " were pledged to the administration in defence and support of the Constitution and the Union."

The time has come when she is called upon to make good these protestations of loyalty to the government, and to furnish for its maintenance some portion of that material aid which she thus voluntarily and nobly proffered.

Combinations against the laws of the United States, have been formed in several of the Southern States, and are likely to be formed in others, constituting in the whole a majority of the slaveholding States, too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceeding, and which, we are not permitted to doubt, have, for their real object and ultimate purpose, the destruction of the government as it exists under the federal Constitution.

Whether the actual convictions and desires of a majority of the people of these misguided and unhappy States are in harmony with such criminal designs, is not material for us now to inquire, inasmuch as it is certain that the policy and organizations of these States, are controlled and directed by men of whose purpose there can be no question whatever.

Shall the government of the United States interpose, and effectually, to defeat these treasonable combinations? Shall the government be maintained or destroyed? Shall it be respected and obeyed, or scoffed at and trampled in the dust?

Those to whom its administration has been committed by the

people under the forms of the Constitution, and with all the solemnities of the simple but august investiture which that instrument has prescribed, would be guilty of an unpardonable crime against the country and against the civilization of the age, should they fail to employ all the means and exert all the power which the law has placed in their hands to prevent the threatened catastrophe.

That they apprehend the true character and extent of their obligations, is manifest from the prompt and vigorous measures which they have adopted for the preservation of the government in this hour of extremest peril.

The President of the United States in virtue of the authority with which he is clothed by the Constitution and laws of Congress has called upon all the States that were not in flagrant rebellion, for a portion of the militia thereof to aid him in suppressing the existing combinations and in enforcing the laws of the United States.

A requisition for a regiment to serve as infantry or riflemen has been made upon me as commander-in-chief of the militia of this State, and it can scarcely be doubted that other requisitions will be made hereafter. An early demonstration of the loyalty, determination and power of the country, may be among the most efficient, economical and humane methods of suppressing the rebellion which flagitious men have instigated, and restoring the government to the peaceful exercise of its legitimate functions.

Upon a careful examination of the laws of the State, and after consulting with eminent legal and military gentlemen, I became satisfied that I had not sufficient authority of law to enable me to respond to the call of the President as the exigency of the case required. Finding myself, therefore, under the necessity of convening the Legislature, I appointed the earliest day for its meeting upon which a full attendance of the members could be had. I thank you for your prompt response to the summons which it thus became my duty to issue.

I cannot doubt that it will be the part of wisdom and duty, or that it will be your pleasure, to make liberal provision, both as to men and money, for the emergency, and such as will enable our loyal and gallant State to contribute her full proportion of what may be necessary of either to vindicate the supremacy of the laws and the integrity of the Union.

So great is the urgency of the occasion and so deep and pervading is the patriotism of our people, that there will be, I presume,

little difficulty in raising by voluntary enlistment all the soldiers that will be required from this State. I would therefore suggest that, not omitting to amend the existing laws, so as to make them more efficient and readily available in such contingency as may possibly arise, you should regard as of primary importance the enactment of such additional provisions as will render the organization and mustering of volunteers into the service of the United States as easy, speedy and efficient as may be.

Whether any legislation is required for the defence and protection of our extended coast is a question which may be worthy of your serious consideration.

To make an appropriation of money sufficient to defray the expense of raising and mustering into the service of the United States such quotas of the militia of the State as you believe will be called for by the President, in any event that may occur, and so much as may be necessary for the defence of the State, is a duty which I need not urge upon your attention.

How the money which you may appropriate should be raised, is a question which will be for you to determine; but in view of the fact that a portion of it will be required immediately, and considering that such is the financial strength and credit of the State that it will be easy to obtain on its credit, at favorable rates of interest, all the funds that may be needed for the purposes to which I have adverted, I would advise that a loan or loans upon such time as you may think expedient, be authorized by the Legislature. And I would recommend that the amount provided for should be such as will comport with the magnitude of the emergency, with the honor of the State and the patriotic devotion of her citizens.

Gentlemen of the Senate and of the House of Representatives:—All of us—even the wisest and most far-seeing—have failed to perceive the intentions, or to understand fully the movements of the malign spirits who have dominated the policy of a large number of the Southern States for many years. For years, as recent developments have shown, they have been laboring with one object and plotting to one end—the subversion of the government. To accomplish this cherished purpose they have made the election of a President of the United States in opposition to the candidate of their choice, the occasion for plunging those States into a rebellion the most inexcusable and wicked of which the annals of the race afford any example,—because it is an uprising against a government from which they have received nothing but benefits and

favors—a government the most wise, just, beneficent, and the best adapted to promote the prosperity and happiness of the people, that the world has ever seen. For eighty-three years it had been the defence, the protection, the pride and the glory of a people the most prosperous, contented, the best governed, the most secure in all the relations of life, the freest and happiest beneath the sun. Its success and power were accomplished and conspicuous facts—its name, its flag, its prestige as the advanced column of civilization and freedom, were known, respected and honored by all the nations, and to be an American citizen was a distinction and an honor in every court and among every civilized people upon the globe.

The idea of secession being a remedy for real or fancied evils under the government,—the giant heresy that underlies the Southern rebellion,—must be rebuked, exploded, exterminated—for if acknowledged and submitted to there is an end of this government, and the Great Republic will live only in history. The safeguards, the protection, the encouragements afforded by a wise and powerful government will be withdrawn or removed, for the work of disintegration once begun under a construction of the Constitution which permits it, there is no union of the States remaining of any permanent or practical value. If one State may withdraw from the Union at its pleasure, another may do the same thing, and another; and so from being a great Commonwealth of States, with one Constitution, one government, one destiny, the American people will be divided, it is possible, into many jealous and conflicting parts, into “States dissevered, discordant, belligerent,” to be “rent with civil feuds, and drenched, it may be, with fraternal blood.” Rather than a calamity so dire and dreadful should befall our country, in which would be imperilled so much that we have and enjoy, and so much that we hope for for our children, let the loyal States exhaust every resource they possess, and every just expedient upon which they can lay hold, *and let us all resolve, with the calm deliberation that befits the occasion, that in no event, so long as we live, shall it be consummated.*

Perhaps there are no actions or events permitted by the Almighty, that are wholly and altogether evil, and this strange and unnatural rebellion demonstrates and develops the devoted and undying patriotism of our people. The loyal States of this Union, but yesterday broken by parties and factions, to-day stand as one man on

the hallowed ground of the Constitution, and present an exhibition of grandeur and moral sublimity, that will illumine the pathway of mankind through endless generations.

In my inaugural address delivered but a few months ago, I remarked without fear that I could err in what I said, that in such a contingency as has now arrived,

“ We know that our State, whose attachment to the Union has been avouched not only by words but by works—by sacrifices such as she alone of all the States has been called to make, even by the dismemberment of her territory that the nation might have peace—will renew her claim upon the gratitude of the country by the alacrity with which she will furnish material and efficient proofs of her fidelity and virtue. Then the divisions of party will disappear from amongst us, and the names by which we have been recognized will be forgotten, and all will be known as patriots and defenders of the Union.”

And so it is, and so it shall be, and this Union is to be defended and the Constitution preserved, not by Democrats, not by Republicans, but by men who love their country—and all men of whatever party, who are for the government and will stand by it and fight for it, are brethren. For one I know no difference, and I will know no difference, and I will hold that man as wanting in the highest quality of patriotism, who will know any distinction between men, founded upon their former party relations.

GENTLEMEN :—This is no time for words—the hour for action has arrived—prompt, vigorous, decisive, patriotic action. I trust I may venture to express the hope that you will not permit yourselves to be turned aside to the consideration of questions of ordinary legislation, but that you will confine yourselves to those which grow out of the emergency that has called you together. And to your prudence and wisdom, to your love of the State and the country, and your regard for the interests and honor of both, I commit them without misgiving and without fear; and may that good Providence who has heretofore watched over and protected our beloved country, guard and protect it now and forever!

RESOLUTION.

Mr. GOULD of Thomaston moved, and the Legislature adopted, the following resolution :

Resolved, That it is the duty of every citizen of Maine to give his earnest and undivided support to the General Government of the American Union as the representative and only hope of *Constitutional Liberty*, now imperilled by an alarming rebellion pervading a large section of the country—that all former differences ought to be forgotten in the presence of the imminent peril of that country, to preserve which we are resolved to strive with one another in generous emulation,—that in imitation of our Fathers “we pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor” to the preservation of that Government which they committed to us that we may transmit it unbroken to our children.

STATE OF MAINE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, }
April 24, 1861. }

Ordered, That the Clerk be required to procure for the use of the Legislature, the printing of three thousand additional copies of the Governor's Message, together with the Resolve offered by Mr. GOULD of Thomaston.

CHARLES A. MILLER, *Clerk*.