

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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DOCUMENTS

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE.

1865.

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1865.

FORTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATE.

No. 20.

The Joint Standing Committee on Coast and Frontier Defences, to whom was referred so much of the annual message of his Excellency the Governor as relates to this subject, having had the same under consideration, beg leave to report :

That from Kittery Point to Quoddy Head, Maine has a water line of over three thousand miles, including all indentations. Her direct water frontage is nearly three hundred miles, with over one hundred safe and convenient harbors, that furnish superior advantages for commerce. The exposed and defenceless condition of this long reach of coast, its contiguity to a power which, while presumed to be neutral, makes no concealment of the aid and comfort which it affords the enemies of this government in its harbors whenever opportunities arise therefor, has for the past four years induced the Executives of this State to represent from time to time to the authorities at Washington the necessity of providing gunboats to patrol the coast of Maine, for the protection of the immense property that is endangered. The piratical seizure of the revenue cutter Caleb Cushing, in Portland harbor, and the capture of the steamer Chesapeake, on her passage from New York to Portland, the raid of the pirate Tallahassee, in the summer of 1864, at the time of the visit of the Congressional Committee to Maine, destroying coasters and fishing vessels in our eastern waters, illustrate the dangers to which the commerce of Maine is exposed.

As an illustration of the importance of this protection, we find by return of the lighthouse keeper on Pemaquid Point, that in 1864, fifty-six (56) steamers, fourteen (14) ships, twenty-two (22) barques, thirty-six (36) brigs, four thousand two hundred and sixty-seven (4,267) schooners, and fifty-one (51) sloops, passed

this light, without including any vessels passing eastward of Monhegan Island, or the fishing vessels on the coast, three hundred and fifty (350) of which are often counted at the same time in the vicinity of this light. Similar testimony might be adduced from other points on the coast.

There are no less than forty of lighthouses from Kittery Point to Quoddy Head.

The destruction of vessels in August last by the pirate Tallahassee at Matinic Rock took place on the same day, and almost in sight of the steam cutter Mahoning, on her Congressional trip from the Kennebec to the Penobscot.

Maine is a shipbuilding State, in which interest she has attained a leading position among the sister States. One half of the shipping annually built in the United States is constructed within her borders. She owns at least one third. This interest is a vital one. Her prosperity depends upon it, and although it is materially affected by the depressing influences of the rebellion, still in the carrying trade, and in the prosecution of the fisheries, the waters of her coast yet bear the valuable commerce of her industrious people.

In 1860, there were 801,941 tons of shipping owned in the State, one third of which was employed in the coasting trade, and nearly one tenth in the fisheries. The value of exports of that year was : domestic, \$3,324,426 ; foreign, \$345,129 ; total, \$3,669,555. The value of imports was \$1,716,075. Total movement, \$5,375,636, having doubled in ten years, and much more rapidly since 1860. We will not dwell on the importance of protecting these great commercial and maritime interests. Her registered tonnage is under the ban of rebel cruisers. Their piratical depredations on our coast have aroused a feeling of apprehension bordering on alarm among those living near tide waters. Loyal and self-sacrificing, as our commercial class have shown themselves to be, they desire the national government in return to extend its strong naval arm along the coast, for the protection of their interests.

Nor do we deem it essential to go into a lengthy argument to show the general government the necessity of a patrol of gunboats along the coast. The necessity exists, as the Chief Magistrates of Maine, since the outbreak of the rebellion, have repeatedly made known. Our convictions are, that two gunboats would suffice.

Coaling stations could be established at convenient points, so that there would be no interruption in police service.

We urge upon our delegation in Congress their attention in this matter, and hope that it will be attended to promptly and seasonably. We therefore submit the accompanying Resolves.

WILLIAM McGILVERY,
LEWIS L. WADSWORTH, JR.,
T. J. SOUTHARD,
GIDEON MAYO,
JOSEPH DAY,
CHARLES A. SHAW,
DAVID P. WASGATT,
SPAULDING ROBINSON,
E. ADAMS DAVIS,
JOEL VALLEY.

STATE OF MAINE.

RESOLVES calling on the United States government to place steam vessels of war, as a permanent ocean police, upon the coast of Maine.

Resolved, That Maine reiterates and renews its demands on the United States government, made through the legislature and by his excellency the governor, for protection of its exposed frontier and seacoast.

Resolved, That the United States government has failed to do its duty to Maine, neglecting to place steam vessels of war on its coast, as requested by the governor, in consequence of which, during the past year, we have witnessed, in the piratical expedition of the Tallahassee, the destruction of a large number of coasters and fishing vessels, within sight of our own coast, clearly foreseen by all practical business men, interested in shipping, after the seizure of the cutter Caleb Cushing, in Portland harbor, and the capture of the steamer Chesapeake on her trip from New York to Portland.

Resolved, That the governor be requested again to
2 renew his request for the steam vessels of war, as a
3 permanent patrol force on the coast of Maine.

Resolved, That our senators and representatives in
2 congress be respectfully requested to urge this matter
3 upon the attention of the proper authorities at Wash-
4 ington.

Resolved, That the governor be requested to transmit
2 to the president and to the secretary of war and secre-
3 tary of the navy, and to each house of congress, a
4 copy of the foregoing resolutions, and to employ such
5 agent or agents as he may deem proper to carry the
6 same into effect.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, February 17, 1865.

Laid on the table, and on motion of Mr. MCGILVERY ordered to be printed for the use of the Legislature.

THOMAS P. CLEAVES, *Secretary.*