

Inaugural address
of
John Gregory Smith
As it appears in the
Journal
of the
House of Representatives
Annual Session
1863

Friday, October 9, 1863
Inaugural Address

*Gentlemen of the Senate
and House of Representatives:*

As we assemble once again for the exercise of the high and responsible duties assigned by the Constitution of the State, let us devoutly render to Almighty God our homage of praise and thanksgiving, that He has vouchsafed to us His blessing for the past year; that he has graciously permitted us, as a nation, to rejoice in His returning favor, and has crowned our arms with many and signal successes.

In the discharge of the high trust committed to your care, many subjects will be brought before you for consideration, deeply affecting the welfare of the State, and the material condition of those whose representatives and servants you are; and in briefly directing your attention to some of these, I respectfully invite for them your careful deliberation, and your most dispassionate counsels.

FINANCES OF THE STATE

I herewith transmit a report of the Treasurer of the State, exhibiting the transactions of that department for the past fiscal year.

From this report it appears that the total receipts into the Treasury from all sources have been
Total disbursements,

\$2,852,451 99
2,730,018 24

Leaving balance on hand, Sept. 5, 1863,
The amount of funded liabilities is stated to be
The amount of current liabilities,

\$122,433 75
1,130,723 62
453,478 31

Balance in Treasury,
Due on Taxes,

\$122,433 75
54,370 69
----- 176,804 44

Excess of liabilities over resources,

\$276,673 89

To which are to be added the expenses for the current year, approximately estimated as follows:

Extra pay of \$7 per month of to the soldiers now in service,
Ordinary State Expenses,
Interest on loans and funded debt,

\$800,000 00
165,000 00
95,000 00

\$1,336,673 89

Balance of bonds authorized in 1862, but not yet issued,

545,000 00

Leaving to be provided for,

\$791,673 89

To which should be added whatever expenses may be incurred in raising additional troops.

There is still a balance due from the United States, for expenses in raising and furnishing troops, of about

\$60,000 00

It is a question for you, gentlemen, to determine, whether it is better to increase the bonded debt, or whether it is wiser to provide by a tax sufficient to meet the present liabilities, and the necessary expenses for the current year, so far as they can be approximately made.

The State, in all its industrial interests, is in a prosperous and healthful condition, and whether the people will ever be better able to meet the burdens arising from our national trials than at present, is for you to judge.

I commit the question to your consideration, believing that you will, even better than myself, understand the feelings and wishes of your several constituencies, and that you will bring to the subject that enlightened and careful judgment which its magnitude and importance demands.

MILITARY

By the report of the Adjutant and Inspector General, it appears that Vermont has sent into the service of the United States sixteen regiments of infantry, one regiment of light artillery, numbering in all 18,224 men. Of these, the first regiment of infantry, the three month's men, were returned and discharged at the expiration of their term of enlistment, leaving at the commencement of the present year, fifteen regiments infantry, one regiment cavalry, three companies sharpshooters, and two batteries of artillery. No additional regiments have been raised during the year. During the present season, the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th regiments of nine month's men have been mustered out of service, their time of enlistment having expired. The year from the various casualties of war, the whole number now remaining being only 7884, of whom only 6150 are on duty.

It is, therefore, a duty which the State owes to the Government that these regiments should be filled as speedily as possible. Every consideration of patriotism, justice to the noble men who have born the burdens of the fight hitherto, and whose ranks have been thinned by the heroic and fearless exposures to the fire of the enemy, the honor of the State, all, conspire to heighten the obligation which the State is under, to urge new and fresh recruits into the ranks as rapidly as possible.

It was at one time in contemplation by the Government to consolidate the decimated regiments as far as could be done, as a measure of relief, and as the surest means at hand, of securing the most effective service, with the limited number of troops then at the command of the Government. Such a measure, however necessary and justifiable it may have at the moment seemed, would have been most unjust to the war-worn and noble men and officers, who had so bravely and faithfully done their duty. It was not their fault that their ranks were thinned; it bespoke the highest commendation for their fortitude and courage, and hence, it was but just to those veteran regiments, that their organizations should be preserved, and they be permitted, if possible, to fight under the same associations, and side by side with tried and familiar comrades, rather than be consolidated with stranger troops, and under untried commanders. Fully appreciating the justice of this measure, and the advantages to be derived from it, in May last, my predecessor called the attention of the Secretary of War to the importance of filling the ranks of the veteran regiments with new recruits, rather than consolidate the regiments in the field, and augment the army by new regiments for service. The Secretary of War adopted the suggestion, and decided to appropriate the avails of the then approaching draft to the recruiting of the old regiments. It was hoped that sufficient men would thus be realized to meet the demand. The result of the draft, however, shows that only one-fourth of the requisite of men has been furnished.

Opportunity has more recently been offered by the Government, through the agency of recruiting officers, to enlist men to fill these regiments, offering as inducement large bounties, both to veterans and now recruits, to enlist. It becomes, therefore, more imperatively the duty of the State, and of every patriotic citizen to aid this effort by every means in their power.

THE DRAFT

Under the Act of Congress, approved March 3d, 1863, providing "for enrolling and calling out the National forces and for other purposes," the militia of this State were duly enrolled in June last, and a draft was ordered to be made under the direction of officers appointed by the United States Government. The constitutional right of the Government to adopt this method of raising troops, has been called in question, and serious embarrassments have arisen, in consequence of organized efforts in various parts of the country to resist the draft. Studious efforts have been made to throw odium upon this measure, by characterizing it as a conscription, and by this means to deter citizens from yielding that cheerful compliance to the demands of the law, which, more than ever, in this terrible crisis, it was their duty to do.

The law, so far from being a conscription, in any sense charged against it, is relieved entirely of all that was odious under the old French system, and only provides, in the mildest form known to history, the simple and most equitable form of a draft, with the addition of a reasonable and mild commutation, so moderate in amount as to place it within the power of men of limited means even, to avail themselves of the provision. There can be no doubt, under any fair and reasonable interpretation of the Constitution, but that Congress had the clear and obvious power to resort to this mode of raising men to replenish the wasted army. Independently, however, of all questions of Constitutional authority, it is the law of the land, and as such, is entitled to the obedience and respect of the citizens of the Government, until in the proper and legitimate method, it is judicially determined to be unconstitutional, and therefore void.

The quota assessed to this State, to be raised under the act, was 4715. Of this number only 948 have entered the service or furnished substitutes, and 1833 have paid the commutation. There has thus been paid, by the citizens of this State, into the Treasury of the United States, about *Five Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars*.

The men raised by the draft have been sent to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th regiments, excepting 164, performing duty at Brattleboro.

STATE MILITIA AND MILITIA LAW

The Legislature at its last session passed an act for “the organization, regulation and government of the Militia of this State.”

The act provides simply for an enrollment of persons liable to do military duty, between the ages of 18 and 45, and for the proper exemptions. In case of “war, invasion, the prevention of invasion, the suppression of insurrection or riots, and to aid civil officers in the execution of the laws of the State, the Commander-in-Chief may order for actual service, by draft or otherwise, as many of the enrolled Militia, as the case demands.” In the event the militia are called out, upon the happening of any of the contingencies named in the act, then provision is made for the proper drafting, the system of substituting, the mode of organization, and such other measures as are necessary to render the military power of the State, efficient and serviceable.

For all immediate practical purposes, therefore, beyond a simple enrollment, the law is wholly without value, and really affords to the State no protection, nor present available means of defense.

In pursuance of the act, the proper instructions, forms, blanks, &c., were prepared and distributed to the selectmen of the several towns, and the militia of the State were duly enrolled in the month of January last. Medical Boards were appointed, furnished with the necessary instructions, and held sessions in the different counties, for the purpose of examining and exempting such as were not liable to do military duty. Commissioners were also appointed to enroll the militia in the Gores and unorganized towns in the State.

The result of the enrollment was as follows:

Number enrolled,	47,183
Exempted by Medical Boards,	3,384
In United States Service,	13,687 — 17,071

Total number liable to draft,	30,112

Of this number there are known to be many who are wholly unfit for military service, being notoriously disabled, and who from that fact refused or neglected to attend before the Medical Board for examination, and pay the fee prescribed by the act, because they felt certain of being exempted, if drafted. As a result of this, the quota of the State is largely increased, and additional burdens are imposed upon those liable to draft, and injustice is thereby done to the State.

I would call your especial attention to this subject, and would recommend that the law be modified so as to guard against such a result in the future. The best mode of remedying the evil is left to your judgment. Whether it would be better to abolish altogether the fee required to be paid to the Board by the applicant for exemption, or whether it would be sufficient to authorize the board to refund, to every person who receives a certificate of exemption, the fee advanced by him, are questions for your consideration. Additional provision could also be

made for ascertaining and enrolling with more care the men who are in the service of the United States, and their exemption for that cause should be properly shown upon the enrollment list.

In the present disturbed state of affairs, both as regards the civil strife which is raging in our country, as also the critical position of the relations of this country with foreign nations, it becomes a question of serious moment for you, gentlemen, to consider whether a more efficient and active militia system is not now required in the State. The active preparations which are being made in a neighboring province for a complete, thorough and efficient organization of their militia, should properly lead us to inquire into the state of our own defenses, and the condition in which we as a State would be left, in the event of a disturbance of the amicable relations, for the present subsisting, between this Government and foreign powers. I invite your thoughtful attention to the subject, confident that you will bestow upon it that deliberate consideration which its importance justly demands.

THE SICK AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS IN HOSPITAL.

The communication from my predecessor, already laid before you, gives the full particulars on this subject. It appears that over twenty-five hundred sick and wounded Vermont soldiers, in more than one hundred general hospitals, in the different states, have been visited, and over one thousand have been transferred to the hospitals in the different States, have been visited, and over one thousand have been transferred to the hospitals in Vermont. The change of air and treatment thus secured, has not only been of immense value to the poor soldier, but has contributed a larger percent of cured and returned to duty, than from any other general hospitals known.

The system is of great value, and no effort of mine shall be wanting to give it all the efficiency the nature of the case will admit of.

THE STATE IN HER AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS AND PROSPECTS.

I have only time to allude, in a general way, to the material interests of Vermont, in that department of her industry which constitutes alike her pride, and her chief source of wealth. In an eminent degree, Vermont is an agricultural State, and it is to this, more perhaps, than to any other source, that she is indebted for the high character for virtue and morality, which she everywhere sustains – for that spirit of exalted patriotism, which has ever been her leading characteristic, and for that love of freedom and free institutions which have secured for her and enviable distinction on the records of our nation's history.

Within the last decade of the agricultural interests of Vermont have received an impetus and a growth which has placed her in the foremost ranks. The ready means of transportation to market, afforded by her railroads, placing her thus in ready communication with the seaboard, for foreign markets, and with the large and prosperous manufacturing districts of neighboring States, have contributed in no small degree to the advancement and prosperity of the State in this her leading interest.

Already have her dairy products and her horses found their way to foreign markets, and acquired an enviable notoriety, and still more recently, her sheep have been introduced into favorable notice in foreign countries, and under circumstances likely to secure to Vermont, not only a high reputation, but to bring her in return, a rich and extensive trade in that branch of her industry. In February last, the State Agricultural Society appointed Hon. Daniel Needham, the efficient Secretary of the Society, Commissioner to attend and represent the to be held at Hamburg, in Germany. Other States were represented at the Exhibition by Commissioners appointed under State authority. New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Illinois, and I think Pennsylvania, were all represented. Among another products taken from Vermont by the Commissioner for exhibition, were taken from Vermont by the Commissioner for exhibition, were twelve merino sheep, and I am happy to congratulate the State upon the success which attended the enterprise.

In the list for competitors for prizes at the Exhibition, were more than two thousand sheep, representing the best flocks from all the Germanic states, from France, England, and nearly all the countries of Central Europe. Against this strong competition, and contending against the natural prejudices existing towards American products, Vermont won, at the hands of an able and impartial board of judges, the two first prizes, and one second prize, for her sheep. The result of this to the sheep breeding interests of Vermont, can hardly be

estimated. It was a great achievement, and is destined to give to America, and especially to Vermont, that which Europe has for so long a time almost exclusively enjoyed, to the rich and valuable trade in stockbreeding sheep.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE – LAND SCRIP.

The Legislature at its last session passed an act “providing for the appointment of agents to receive and dispose of the land scrip to which this State may be entitled under the act of Congress, approved July 2d, 1862.”

The act, after appointing the agents to receive the scrip, and conferring upon them certain powers, and imposing upon them certain duties, authorizes the Governor of the State to receive proposals for such donations of land, buildings and funds, as may be tendered from any portion of the State, or from any person or persons, for the purpose of establishing a College, according to the provisions of the act of Congress. The act also provides, “that all moneys derived from the sale of the land scrip shall be invested by the Treasurer of the State, in safe stocks, yielding not less than five per cent. Upon the par value of the stocks, and the interest of the fund shall be appropriated for the purposes declared in the act of Congress.”

The act of Congress donates to each State land to the amount of thirty thousand acres to each Senator and Representative in Congress, the proceeds of the sale of which, or of the land scrip to be issued therefor, is to be invested in stocks of the United States, or of the States, or some other safe stocks, yielding not less than five per cent, upon the par value of said stocks, and to constitute a perpetual fund, the interest of which is to be inviolably appropriated to the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one College in each State, where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to Agriculture, and the Mechanic Arts, in such manner as the Legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life, — and further providing that any State which may take the benefit of the provisions of the act, shall provide, within five years from the date of said act, at least one College, as described in the act, or the grant to the State to cease; and requiring the State, by its legislation, to express its acceptance of the provisions of the act within two years from the date of its approval.

This brief synopsis of the general features of the act of Congress will enable you to understand more readily the position which this State, by its action at the last session of the Legislature, occupies in reference to the subject. The act of last fall expressed the acceptance, by the State, of the provisions of the act of Congress, within the prescribed period. It also appointed agents to procure the land scrip from the United States Government, to which this State is entitled, to dispose of the same, and invest the proceeds of the sales in safe stocks, bearing not less than five per cent., and appropriated the fund to establish a College, as required by the act of Congress.

The agents appointed under the act will, in due time, submit a report of their doings. I understand, however, that application has been made to the Secretary of the Interior for the land scrip, and that the scrip either has already been, or will soon be, issued by the State.

There remains now but a little more than three years, within which time the state must comply with the provisions of the act of Congress, and establish a College for the purposes specified, or the grant, as to this State, is to cease.

The shortness of the time, the importance and magnitude of the enterprise, its effects upon the education interests of the State, and the great variety of questions involved, justify me in calling your especial attention to the subject at this time.

By the terms of the grant, there will fall to the share of Vermont one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land, which, at the minimum valuation of government lands, is equivalent to one hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred dollars, which, safely invested in our own State stocks, bearing six per cent. Interest, would yield an annual income of eleven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars, for the support of the institution to be established; or, computing the valuation at double the minimum price, which it is not unreasonable to expect to realize for the scrip, and which is the rate for railroad grants, the valuation at double the minimum price, which it is not unreasonable to expect to realize for the scrip, and which is the rate for

railroad grants, the valuation would be equivalent to three hundred and seventy five thousand dollars. These valuations of land, or amounts to be realized from the sales of the land scrip, will be varied according the circumstances, and may be enhanced or diminished according to the location, and the judgment and skill used in making sales of the same, and a variety of other causes that may contribute to appreciate or lessen the demand for them. Taking into account the tide of emigration setting towards this country, growing out of the efforts being made, and the various organizations which have been formed, in various parts of the country, to stimulate and encourage it, it is but reasonable to suppose, that with proper care in the location of the lands, and judgment in the sales of the scrip, at least the last figures named above may be realized to the State.

The object of this generous grant is fully expressed in the act itself, “the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one College, where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislature of the States may respectively prescribe, *in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes, in the several pursuits and professions in life.*” A most worthy object indeed—and sustained by a most munificent grant,—available to every state and abundant, if properly managed, to secure the desired end—the education and consequent elevation of the masses of the people. Fully harmonizing with the genius of our democratic institutions, utilitarian in its scope and plans, favoring no privileged class, but generously opening broad the door for the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes, affording them access, not only to the higher branches of a scientific and classical education, but superadding to this a systematic and thorough training in the every-day, practical, and hitherto almost untaught, science of agriculture and the mechanic arts.

To Vermont, this scheme has a peculiar values and importance. Eminently practical in all her pursuits and interests, with a population hardly equaled, certainly not surpassed, in intelligence and virtue, her hardy sons only need the stimulating influences which a thorough education in such an institution, properly managed, would afford, to place them in the foremost ranks among the cultivated and refined, and secure to her a position for intelligence, wealth, influence and refinement, second to none in the great sisterhood of states.

The grave question, however, arises, how the benefit to be derived from such an institution can best be secured. Shall it be established as a separate and independent institution, in which shall be taught all the higher branches of a scientific and classical education, with a school for military tactics, and the agricultural and mechanical branches? This is, manifestly, the design and scope of the grant. But can such a College be sustained, and yet justice be done to the other institutions, already established in the State, and which, to a greater or less extent, have always been under its fostering care? Can a department of agriculture and mechanic arts, and of military tactics, be attached to one or the other of these institutions, without creating local jealousies, and in this way secure the benefits of the act?

There are now in the State two Colleges and one Military School, — each of them established under the authority of the State Legislature, with certain powers and privileges, and each having been made the beneficiaries, to greater or less extent, of gifts, bequests and endowments, and yet, so far as my knowledge extends, neither of them is fully self-sustaining, and although they all rank high as seminaries of learning, and have accomplished a good work in the cause of education, numbering among their alumni many of the noblest minds of the country, of whom the State and the institutions may well be proud, yet, in financial resource, they have not that healthful vigor and strength necessary to a full and proper development, and without which it is, and ever must be, impossible to realize the true idea of their creation.

If a plan could be devised, by which the several institutions could be combined into one, uniting the strength and resources of all, and adding to this the departments contemplated by the act of Congress, and securing thereby the funds to be received from the grant of lands, then, indeed, might be realized the true idea of a University for the State, an institution which would justly be the pride of the State, an institution which would justly be the pride of the State, and which, without being its beneficiary, would yet receive its liberal countenance and its patronage. For such an institution, in all its various departments, the best talent of the country could be secured, and a rank and character given to it that few institutions now enjoy.

I am by no means unmindful of the difficulties that lie at the threshold of such an enterprise. There are local questions and jealousies to overcome, all the feelings which so strongly attach to Alma Mater, and a variety of difficulties, that will naturally occur to the minds of all. Still, are not the benefits to be derived from a combination of these several institutions, and the establishment of one, on the basis which I have suggested, sufficient to override all these objections and difficulties? Will not the new impulse be given to the cause of education, and the facilities to be afforded to the industrial classes in the State, through the agency of a well organized institution of this kind, be sufficient inducement to overcome local prejudices and feelings, and other minor difficulties that may stand in the way?

There is another feature connected with this subject, which may not be unworthy of consideration.

By the act of last fall, the Treasurer is authorized "to invest the proceeds of the sales of the land scrip in some safe stocks, yielding not less than five per cent. Per annum;" and the act of Congress authorizes the investment in United States stocks, or in State stocks. The amount to be realized from the sales of this scrip, as has already been stated, will vary according to circumstances, but it is not unreasonable to hope that it may reach the highest figures named.

The present funded debt of the State, as now authorized bearing six per cent per annum, is one million six hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

May not a portion of this debt be permanently merged in this land-scrip fund, and thus the State be benefited to that extent, in a permanent investment, the interest of which shall be paid to her own institution, and for the benefit of a cause, so commendable as that of the educational growth and prosperity of her own citizens?

Whether any action is required at the present session of the Legislature in reference to this subject, is left entirely for you to determine. The suggestions which have occurred to me I have given, merely for your consideration and not as seeking to direct your action. If the attempt to unite the several institutions should be deemed advisable, and it should be found practicable to do so, some legislation will doubtless be required, as the charters creating them do not, I think, contemplate any such union.

Whether it may be advisable or not to pass an enabling act, at the present session, to provide for such an event, if the public and the patrons and friends of the institution should desire it, or whether it may not be sufficient to refer the whole subject to a Board of Commissioners, to inquire into and report at a future time, are questions for you to determine. It will give me great pleasure to conform to, and to aid any course of action which the Legislature may be pleased to adopt in the premises.

THE SOLDIER AND THE STATE.

I would earnestly recommend the passage of a law securing to the soldiers who are now already, or who may hereafter be called into the service of the United States, from this State, the right to exercise their elective franchise, and guaranteed and secured to the freemen of this State by its Constitution; and I would respectfully urge this measure upon your consideration, as an act of justice to the brave sons and freemen of Vermont, who are so nobly doing battle in the cause of the country and as a fitting testimonial of the appreciation in which those services are held by the people of the State.

Moved by an earnest patriotism, and in the holy ardor of an undying love for the great blessings of civil liberty, restrained by no mean circumstance of personal cost or sacrifice, and with a devoted loyalty to that government which has been their shield and protection, they have gone forth from among us, a noble brotherhood, to imperil life, and all that life holds dear, to battle, not for glory or renown, but to maintain for and perpetuate to us, in common with all the country, the great and glorious principles of constitutional liberty, the heritage of a free people.

Enduring all the hardships and privations of the camp, denying themselves the comforts, the luxuries and privileges of home communions, which we are permitted to enjoy, far away from us, on a stranger and hostile soil, worn and wasted by many sufferings, yet nobly bearing up under them all with a patience and fortitude worthy of the cause for which they suffer, knowing but one duty, service to their country, they appeal in language too strong to be resisted, for that privilege which all freemen so highly prize, which, whether at home

or on the field, is ever dear to their hearts, the right to exercise the elective franchise, that distinguishing mark of freedom and freemen. It surely needs no words of mine to urge this upon your consideration, and while I am deeply sensible of the difficulties that surround the question, and of the opportunity which would be afforded for abuse of the privilege, yet, I am fully confident, that it is in the power of the Legislature to frame a law, which, while it will secure the State to all reasonable extent against frauds and abuse, will also secure to the citizen soldiers a privilege which it is ungenerous to deny, and which can, in all soundness of convincing argument, be urged and claimed as a right. They are rendering high service to the country, in the stupendous conflict which is now stirring the nation to its foundations, by their presence on the field' and shall they be denied a voice at the ballot-box, where preeminently the measures which are to affect, for weal or woe, these great and pending issues must of a necessity be decided.

None, more than they, have a vital interest in these great questions, none have a higher appreciation of the merits involved. Ours are no hireling soldiery, who blindly execute the will of superiors, without knowing for what they fight. They have gone from among the sovereign people, intelligent freemen, constituent elements of the government, to contend for a cause in which they have a personal interest, and to maintain principles which, when the contest is finally closed, will affect them in common with all the rest, and are fully entitled to the privilege of exercising this right.

Proudly do we this day recall the high deeds of valor of our gallant sons and brethren. Nobly have they sustained the well earned fame of their Green Mountain State. With unfaltering courage and heroic endurance have they borne themselves in every contest, and whether on the tented field, or in the dreaded hospital, whether on the long and weary march, or before the murderous fire of traitor bands, everywhere and under all circumstances, have they borne themselves with veteran intrepidity; shrinking from no dangers, quailing under no assaults, but attesting their prowess in every battle, and adding fresh and still brighter laurels to the name and fame of their noble State.

But sadly do we turn to the Heroic Dead! Softly would we touch the strings that vibrate only to plaintive notes, – Husband! Father! Brother! Son! The loved, the fondly cherished! Nobly have they fallen, and in a glorious cause. Their country called, and in the great cause of Humanity, they died, and though their bones lie bleaching on a distant soil, far away from home and friends, yet ever fresh will be their memories in the hearts of the living and the loved.

“ 'T were sweet, indeed, to close our eyes
With those we cherished near,
And wafted upward by their sighs,
Soar to some calmer sphere;
But whether on the scaffold high,
Or in the battle's van,
The fittest place for man to die
Is where he dies for man.”

THE COUNTRY.

In no doubtful sense, is Vermont the uncompromising foe of tyranny and oppression, in whatever form or wherever it exist. Free, as the air of her native hills, in all her own institutions and policies, she has ever advocated the great principles of Constitutional Liberty, in their broadest sense, and maintained them with unwavering fidelity, yet adhering steadfastly TO THE Union in all its integrity. It was this that actuated her, when at the outbreak of the war, the first of all the States, she threw off the shackles of party, and declared herself unqualifiedly for the Constitution and the Union, and for sustaining the Administration in all its efforts to suppress the rebellion. Applying no test of political faith, but loyalty to the Government, and yet, in all this yielding up none of the great cardinal principles, for which she has for years so faithfully contended. Hence it was, that when the proclamation for the emancipation of the slaves was promulgated, she hailed the measure with extreme satisfaction, not only as a military necessity, but as a harbinger of the great work of ultimate destruction to that institution, which has been the origin and cause of all our national troubles.

The progress of events within the past year, in the struggle which now involves the country, has been such as to call forth our devout gratitude to Him who controls the affairs and destinies of nations. We are permitted to enter upon our labors at this time under brighter auspices and more cheering hopes than when we met here, as a legislature, one year ago. Then the clouds hung portentously over our national affairs. Since then, victories have taken the place of defeat, confidence has succeeded to despondency and distrust, and the power of the government is being felt and demonstrated, as one stronghold after another of the rebellion is giving way, and its limits and boundaries are being narrowed and circumscribed.

But while we thus indulge joy at the brightening prospect, let us not be unmindful of the burdens yet to be borne, the sacrifices yet to be made, and the work yet to be accomplished, before we are permitted to enter upon the full and perfect realization of a peace, permanent in its character, a government restored to its pristine power and authority, strengthened and purified by the ordeal through which it has been called to pass, and rendered dearer to the hearts of all its subjects, by the new and added cost of treasure and blood, which have been expended in redeeming it from the assaults of treason, and the machinations of ambitious and designing men.

Reposing with humble faith in the power of an Almighty Ruler to work out his own plan and purposes, and earnestly entreating Him, that he will forgive all our great national sins, and speedily re-establish us, as a nation, wherein shall dwell peace and righteousness, let us steadfastly adhere to the great principles of our fathers, and yield to the government all the aids and encouragements which it is in our power to furnish, whether by active material assistance, or by the no less powerful agency of loyal and hearty sympathy. Let us guard ourselves against the insidious efforts of disloyal men for a dishonorable peace, and firmly resolve to endure to the end, until the last vestige of treason is effaced, and the rightful authority of the Federal arm is fully asserted and willingly confessed throughout each rebellious district, and the people thereof brought into complete subordination to its power and rule.

*Senators and
Gentlemen of the House:*

Upon you as the exponents of a free and sovereign people will devolve the high duties of contributing in a legislative form to the further and more efficient support of the national government. As one of the great sisterhood of States, Vermont has, through you, to utter with still higher power her allegiance to the Federal Government, to express her willingness to endure all needed burdens, to lay upon the sacred altar of our common country the world that she still maintains, in its highest devotion, her love for the great principles of "Freedom and Unity."

In no partisan spirit, therefore, and with a high resolve to admit of no disturbing elements, let us each enter upon our respective duties, and with mutual forbearance, as co-laborers in a great cause, discharge them with a faithful regard to the best interests of our commonwealth.

J.G. SMITH

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER, Montpelier, Oct. 9, 1863.