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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES.

MAY 10, 1861.

Read, and 2000 copies ordered to be printed.

COMMUNICATION

FROM THE

Mayor of Baltimore,

WITH THE

MAYOR AND BOARD OF POLICE OF BALTI-
MORE CITY.

FREDERICK:
ELIHU S. RILEY.
1861.

COMMUNICATION,

To the Honorable,

The General Assembly of Maryland:

In the report recently made to your honorable body by the Board of Police Commissioners of the city of Baltimore, it is stated that in the great emergency which existed in this city on the 19th ult., it was suggested that the most feasible, if not the only practicable mode, of stopping for a time the approach of troops to Baltimore, was to obstruct the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore, and the Northern Central Rail Roads, by disabling some of the bridges on both roads. And it is added that—"his honor, the Mayor, stated to the Board that his Excellency, the Governor, with whom he had a few minutes before been in consultation, in the presence of several citizens, concurred in these views."

As this concurrence has since been explicitly denied by his Excellency, Governor Hicks, in an official communication addressed to the Senate of Maryland on the 4th inst., which I have just seen, it is due to myself that I should lay before you the grounds on which the statement was made to the Board of Police; on which they, as well as myself, acted. I seriously regret that so grave a misunderstanding exists between the Governor and myself on so important a subject.

On the evening of the 19th ult., and after the collision had taken place, I mentioned to Governor Hicks that I had begun to fear it might be necessary to burn the Rail Road bridges, but I did not then, in consequence of intelligence which had been received, think it would be. To which he replied that he had no authority to give such an order.

At about 11 o'clock P. M., of the same day, the Hon. H. Lenox Bond, George W. Dobbin, and John C. Brune, Esqrs., were requested by Gov. Hicks and myself, to go to Washington in a special train, which was provided for the purpose, to explain in person the condition of things in Baltimore, and to bear the following communications from Governor Hicks and myself, which were addressed to the President:

Sir:—This will be presented to you by the Hon. H. Lenox Bond, George W. Dobbin and John C. Brune, Esqrs, who will proceed to Washington by an express train at my request, in order to explain fully the fearful condition of affairs in this city. The people are exasperated to the highest degree by the passage of troops, and the citizens are universally decided in the opinion that no more should be ordered to come.

The authorities of the City did their best to-day to protect both strangers and citizens, and to prevent a collision, but in vain, and but for their great efforts a fearful slaughter would have occurred.

Under these circumstances, it is my solemn duty to inform you that it is not possible for more soldiers to pass through Baltimore unless they fight their way at every step.

I therefore hope and trust, and most earnestly request, that no more troops be permitted or ordered by the government to pass through the City. If they should attempt it, the responsibility for the bloodshed will not rest upon me.

With great respect, your ob't serv't,

GEO. WM. BROWN, Mayor.

The following from Governor Hicks was appended to my communication:

To His Excellency,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

President of the United States :

I have been in Baltimore City since Tuesday evening last, and co-operated with Mayor G. W. Brown, in his untiring efforts to allay and prevent the excitement and suppress the fearful outbreak as indicated above, and I fully concur in all that is said by him in the above communication.

Very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

THOMAS H. HICKS,

Governor of Maryland.

Baltimore, May 9th, 1861.

At about 12 o'clock P. M., the Hon. E. Louis Lowe and Marshal George P. Kane called at my house, where Governor Hicks was passing the night, and Marshal Kane informed me that a telegram had been received that other troops were to come to Baltimore over the Northern Central Rail Road. There was also a report that troops were on their way who, it was thought, might even then be at Perryville on their route to Baltimore. Mr. Lowe, Marshal Kane, my brother John Cumming Brown, and myself went immediately to the chamber of Gov. Hicks, and laid the matter before him. The point was pressed that if troops were suddenly to come to Baltimore with a determination to pass through, a terrible collision and bloodshed would take place, and the consequences to Baltimore would be fearful, and that the only way to avert the calamity was to destroy the bridges. To this the Governor replied—"it seems to be necessary," or words to that effect.

He was then asked by me whether he gave his consent to the destruction of the bridges, and he distinctly, although apparently with great reluctance, replied in the affirmative. I do not assert that I have given the precise language used by Governor Hicks, but I am very clear that I have stated it with substantial correctness, and that his assent was unequivocal, and in answer to a question by me which elicited a distinct affirmative reply.

After this, but before the interview was over, two gentlemen came into the room, both of them strangers to me, but one was introduced as a brother of Governor Hicks, and I am confident that the assent of the Governor to the burning of the bridges was repeated in the presence of those gentlemen.

I went immediately from the chamber of the Governor to the office of the Marshal of Police, where Charles Howard, Esq., the President of the Board of Police, was waiting, and reported to him the assent of the Governor to the destruction of the bridges.

Mr. Howard, or some one else, made a further inquiry as to what had been said by the Governor, whereupon Mr. Lowe, Marshal Kane, and my brother, John C. Brown, all declared that they were present at the interview, and heard Governor Hicks give his assent.

The order to destroy the bridges was accordingly given, and carried out in the manner already reported to your honorable body.

I refer to the accompanying statements of Col. Kane and Mr. J. C. Brown, in confirmation of the correctness of my

recollection of what occurred at the interview with Governor Hicks.

With great respect, your ob't serv't,

GEO. WM. BROWN, Mayor.

Baltimore, May 9, 1861.

About twelve o'clock, on the night of Friday, 19th April last, I was present when a conversation took place between Gov. Hicks and my brother, the Mayor of Baltimore, in reference to the best course to be pursued, by which a repetition of the troubles which had occurred on that day could be prevented.

It was represented to them by Marshal Kane that troops from the North were on their way to Baltimore, and might by the following morning reach the city.

The destruction of the bridges on the Northern Centrals and the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore railroad, was, in the opinion of my brother, the best and most effectual method to obstruct their progress. In this opinion Gov. Hicks fully concurred. When asked by my brother, whether or not he gave his consent to the measure, the Governor expressed a desire for time for reflection. Being reminded by those present of the lateness of the hour, and the necessity for prompt action, my brother again earnestly appealed to Gov. Hicks, and asked him for his consent. Gov. Hicks' answer was, in substance, although I may not use his exact words,—“I see nothing else to be done.” “But sir,” said my brother, “I cannot act without your consent, do you give it?” The Governor's reply was distinctly given in the affirmative.

J. CUMMING BROWN.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

OFFICE OF THE MARSHAL,

Baltimore, May 9, 1861.

Near the hour of 12 P. M. of Friday, the 19th April, the day on which the collision with the Massachusetts troops occurred, I received intelligence that the President of the

Pennsylvania Central Railroad Company had sent a dispatch to a gentleman here, that additional troops would pass through Baltimore on their way to the Capitol.

I immediately sent to the President of the Police Board the intelligence referred to, and called at the residence of his Honor, Mayor Brown, to whom I, also, communicated the information which I had received.

The Mayor immediately had an interview with the Governor, who was then staying at his (Mayor's) house, and afterwards invited me to accompany him to the chamber of his Excellency, to whom I also communicated the information of the purposed coming of the troops.

A general conversation then ensued, in which it was agreed to by all present, that any attempt to pass troops through the city, in the then excited condition of the public mind, would lead to the most fearful consequences, and that any such passage must be prevented or delayed. The Governor fully accorded in these views.

The conversation resulted in the Governor's distinctly and unequivocally consenting, in response to the direct question put to him by the Mayor, that the bridges on the roads by which the troops were expected to come, should be destroyed as the only means of averting the consequences referred to, of their coming at that time.

GEO. P. KANE, Marshal.

FREDERICK, MD., May 10, 1861.

Hon. John C. Brune :

Dear Sir: As reference has been made by his Honor, the Mayor of Baltimore city, to my knowledge of the facts connected with the interview between him and the Governor of Maryland, on the night of the 19th ultimo, it gives me pleasure to furnish the desired statement.

I was present between 11 and 12 o'clock, P. M., on Friday, the 19th of April, at the residence of a prominent citizen of Baltimore, when Marshal Kane, who was one of the company, received information by one of his officers that a telegram had been sent by the President of the railroad company at Philadelphia, announcing the approach of troops to

Baltimore. It was the spontaneous opinion of all present that, in the terribly excited condition of the public mind, an attempt to pass troops through the city would inevitably lead to a bloody collision, and perhaps to other very serious consequences. It was, therefore, proposed to repair at once to the office of the Marshal of Police, and to send immediately for the Mayor and Governor. It was supposed at the time that Gov. Hicks was stopping at the Fountain Hotel. Marshal Kane asked me to accompany him to Mayor Brown's house; and the other gentlemen proceeded to the Marshal's office. Marshal Kane and I accordingly went to the Mayor's residence, and were admitted by his brother, who said that the Mayor had retired. In a few moments the Mayor came down to the parlor, when Marshal Kane stated to him the substance of the information received, and reminded him of the excited condition of the city, which rendered it imperatively necessary to adopt some prompt and efficient measure to delay the advent of the troops, so as to give time for the Federal Government to be correctly apprised of the state of affairs, and to arrest the threatened danger. For that purpose the partial destruction of the bridges was suggested. Mayor Brown immediately assented to the suggestion as one of absolute necessity; but said that as Mayor of the city his jurisdiction terminated with its corporate limits, and that consequently he could not assume to exercise powers beyond those limits. The Mayor added—"the Governor, however, is here, and I will go up and see him." In a few moments he returned and said that Gov. Hicks was not well and would, therefore, receive us in his room. Immediately upon entering the room, Mayor Brown and Marshal Kane gave to Gov. Hicks a full statement of the matter, and solicited his authority to destroy the bridges. Gov. Hicks replied that it was a serious affair to undertake to destroy the bridges, and he expressed some doubt as to his authority to give such an order. It was urged in reply that it was a case of absolute self-preservation, that in three or four hours time a large body of troops would probably be in the city inflamed with passionate resentment against the people of Baltimore for the assault made on their comrades in the Pratt street encounter; and that, as the city was filled with hundreds of excited men, armed to the teeth, and determined to resist the passage of troops, a fearful slaughter must necessarily ensue, and the safety of the city itself be put in peril, unless by the destruction of the bridges time could be gained to avoid the difficulty by peaceable arrangement of some sort. Governor Hicks fully and most distinctly assented to all this, and said, "well, I suppose it must be done," or words of precisely that

import; to which the Mayor replied, substantially—"Governor, I have no authority to act beyond the city limits, and can do nothing in this matter except by your direction; shall the bridges be destroyed?" Gov. Hicks emphatically and distinctly replied in the affirmative. It is absolutely impossible for any misapprehension to exist on this point.

The Mayor, Marshall Kane and I, then proceeded to the Marshal's office, where we found several highly respectable citizens gathered, to whom the Mayor and Marshal gave a statement of their interview with the Governor. The Mayor then issued written orders for the destruction of the bridges. The next morning I learned by the newspaper extras that the orders had been carried into effect.

Respectfully, yours, &c.

E. LOUIS LOWE.