

Transcription

"My most solemn protest against the passage of this ordinance"

I rise now simply to enter my most solemn protest against the passage of this ordinance.

Sir, what is it? A declaration of war against our Government. Believing it to be such, never, so help me God, shall it receive my vote. I know not what may be in the future. I have a wife and six little children standing around her knee and sitting on her lap, and I see nothing but ruin to that family and hundreds of others besides them, if this ordinance shall pass.

What is our condition on the sea coast. We cannot be protected. We cannot have communication with our old mother Commonwealth. Separated by a bay thirty five miles wide, with inlets to admit the enemy and render us liable in a single night to have our property consumed, our negroes run off, our all taken off by a reckless rabble from the Northern States, without a gun or a rifle in my county; with only a few blank cartridges, a few balls and a few little piece of ordnance which were sent there to keep down servile insurrection, in case it should break out. I say, sir, with such disadvantages, who can doubt that our condition, in the event of war, must be desperate. I see nothing, in fact, but ruin for my people in the policy which it is intended to inaugurate here to-day.

A few years ago, sir, when a boy so high [describing the height] I stood by the bed side of the only parent I ever knew. Besides many other wise counsels he gave me, he told me to try always and do right; to walk steadily and constantly in the path of duty, and that God would bless my efforts. I have sought zealously to observe these counsels; I have tried with all my might to discharge my duty to all, and I congratulate myself that so far the results have been very much as predicted by my good parent . . . and if no other man in this assembly will cast his vote against it, I will stand here solitary and alone and do it. I will not only do that, but when I go back to my people, I will vote against it and advise the people to vote against it. But if a majority of these people vote for it, then it becomes the act of the people and I will submit; and whenever the standard of the Old Dominion floats, I will rush to it; and I venture to say I will be found as true to it as the most ultra in this Convention or out of it.

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