

The President laid before the Senate the following communication :

STATE OF MARYLAND,

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,

Annapolis, February 23, 1865.

*To the General Assembly of Maryland :*

I deem it proper to call to your attention the Act of the present session entitled, "an Act to provide bounty for soldiers entering the service of the United States, &c.," with the view of suggesting such an alteration of some of its provisions as will effectuate its probable intent, and define with more precision the course of proceeding on the part of those entrusted with its execution.

By the first section it is provided "that whenever under the aforesaid proclamation of the President, or any other similar one hereafter made, a *draft shall take place* in this State to fill her quota, or the residue of her quota under such call, a bounty of three hundred dollars shall be paid, &c." According to the fair interpretation of these terms the proposed bounty could only be paid after the draft has actually taken place; such is my construction of the Act, and in which the Attorney General, whose opinion I requested concurs, but such I have reason to believe was not your intention, and I therefore take the earliest opportunity of bringing the Act to your notice that a proper alteration may be made in its terms.

I would also take the occasion to suggest that there is some apparent ambiguity in the terms of the second section which it may be well to remove.

In conferring, as that section does, upon the Bounty Boards authority to draw upon the Treasury for the amount of the bounty awarded, there is the greater necessity that their course of proceeding should be distinctly prescribed, that we may avoid the confusion likely to ensue from a diversity of action among twenty-four different Boards, each of which may otherwise give a different construction to the Act, or adopt different rules in regard to the payments they are required to make.

The section referred to provides that these Bounty Boards "shall have the right to draw upon the Treasurer, upon the warrant of the Comptroller of the State, for the amount of three hundred dollars for each drafted man, volunteer or representative substitute, or his authorized agent or attorney, to be paid to such persons as may furnish proper certificates from the officer authorized to grant such certificates, that he has volunteered, been drafted and held to service, or furnished a substitute under said call, or any similar call hereafter made