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Congress of the United States.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, Feb. 26.

An act altering the district of Bermuda Hundred and City point, was read the third time and passed.

A memorial of Captain Philip Sloan, praying to be reimbursed the amount of monies advanced for him by the banking house of Bacris & Co. of Algiers, to procure his ransom from captivity, was read and referred to the committee of claims.

Mr. Gallatin presented according to order a bill fixing the compensation of receivers of public monies for lands of the United States, and regulating the mode of calculating discounts in case of prompt payment for the said lands, which was read twice and referred to a committee of the whole to-morrow.

Mr. J. C. Thomas made report from the committee appointed on the petition of Nottley Young, & others; whereupon resolved that the petitioners have leave to withdraw their petition.

This petition desired permission from Congress to build a bridge over the eastern branch of the Potomack.

The house proceeded to consider the amendment reported yesterday from the committee of the whole house to whom was committed the bill providing for a Naval peace Establishment; some of which were agreed to, and others disagreed to.

A motion was then made to strike out the 4th section, which is as follows:

Be it enacted, That every captain, master, commandant, lieutenant, who shall be in service at the time when the reduction of the navy shall take place as aforesaid, while remaining unemployed, shall have and receive during his natural life and continuance in office, one half his monthly pay, agreeably to the rank of his commission or warrant; on condition however, that he shall at all times hold himself in readiness to enter into actual service, and to pay on being so ordered; and that he shall keep the secretary of the Navy advised of his place of residence and of the nearest post town there to and shall not at any time absent himself from his place of residence more than 40 days without first having obtained written permission from the navy department.

And on the question being taken by Yeas and Nays, it passed in the negative—Yeas 48 Nays 49.

A motion was then made to add the following section: "That the President of the U. States be and he is authorized to discharge any part of the Marine Corps which may be unnecessary for the naval service."

And on the question being taken thereupon, it passed in the affirmative, Yeas 53—Nays 49.

The committee was then re-commissioned to a committee of the whole, who having considered the same, reported the disagreement of the committee to the 4th section; and on the question being taken, the house confirmed the disagreement of the committee.

On the question of passing the bill to a third reading, it passed in the affirmative Yeas 70—Nays 27.

Ordered that the said bill be read the third time to-morrow.

Friday, Feb. 27.

An act to retain a further sum on drawbacks for the expenses incident to the allowance and payment thereof, and in lieu of stamp duties on debentures, was read a third time and passed. The act providing for a Naval peace Establishment was read a third time and passed, by yeas and nays as follow: Yeas 69—Nays 18.

YEAS.—Messrs. Allison, Bailey, Bartlett, Bayard, Bishop, J. Brown, R. Brown, Cabell, Christie, Clay, Claiborne, Condit, Davis, Dawson, Dennis, Dent, Eggleston, Evans, Freeman, Gallatin, Gregg, Griswold, Grove, Hanna, Heister, Hill, Holmes, Jackson, Kitchel, Kitters, S. Lee, Leib, Lincoln, Lion, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Mattoon, Morris, Muhlenberg, New, Nicholas, Nicholson, Page, Powell, Randolph, J. Reed, N. Reed, Shepard, Smilie, J. Smith, S. Smith, Spaight, Stanford, Stone, Sumpter, Stewart, Tallalero, Tenney, Thatcher, J. C. Thomas, Thompson, A. Trigg, J. Trigg, Tazewell, Varnum, Wan, R. Williams, L. Williams—69.

NAYS.—Messrs. Champlin, Cooper, F. Davenport, Dickson, Edmond, Foster, G. N. C. Goodrich, E. Goodrich, Huger, Imley, Otis, Parker, Platt, J. C. Smith, Sheate, Wadsworth, Woods—18.

A message was received from the President transmitting a report of the secretary of state with sundry documents relative to the subject of the resolution of the House of Representatives on the 24th instant.

Mr. Griswold from the committee appointed to enquire into the expenditures of money, made by the commissioners of the City of Washington, the disposition of public property made by them, and generally into all the transactions of the commissioners, which relate to the execution of the trust confided to them by the President of the United States, made a report, which was read and considered.

Whereupon Resolved, That a committee be appointed to prepare and report a bill to abolish the board of commissioners of the city of Washington, and to direct that the business of that board be transferred to the department of the treasury.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to prepare and report a bill directing the Secretary of the Treasury, under the direction of the President of the United States, to prepare a plan of the city of Washington, delineating the streets, squares and public ground therein, and to report the same to Congress in December next.

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to prepare and report a bill to authorize the sale of the lands in the district of Columbia, under proper regulations, to raise the monies, which may at any time be due and unpaid, on contracts for the sale of such lands.

On the above resolutions Messrs. Griswold, Chase, Henderson, Craik, and Tenney were appointed a committee.

A message was received from the President, transmitting, in pursuance of the request of the house made on the 17th inst. two reports—one from the acting

Secretary of War, the other from the Secretary of the Treasury of the 26th, with details of the expenditures of the monies appropriated by the acts of the 20th May, and 6th July, 1798, and the 10th of May, 1800.

Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Dennis reported a bill, entitled "An act concerning the district of Columbia," which was read twice, and referred to a committee of the whole to-morrow.

Mr. Nicholas, from the joint committee appointed to consider what other measures ought to be taken for the accommodation of the President of the United States, and to whom was referred the message of the President concerning the disposition of the property of the United States in his possession, made a report, which report was committed to a committee of the whole to-morrow.

Mr. Nicholas from the same committee, reported a bill in addition to the act making provision for the further accommodation of the household of the President of the U. S. which was read twice and referred to a committee of the whole to-morrow.

The house proceeded to consider the amendments reported yesterday to the bankrupt law, which were agreed to, & on the question of enrollment for a third reading, it passed in the affirmative by yeas and nays—Yeas 49—Nays 45.

The bill, in one of its provisions, enacts, that the bankrupt law passed last session (which is limited to five years continuance) shall be perpetual.

Monday, March 2.

The house resolved itself into a committee on the bill for the further accommodation of the President of the United States.

The object of this bill was to apply 6000 dollars, remaining of the appropriation of 15,000 dollars during the last session for furnishing the President's household, together with the proceeds of such furniture as, being unfit for use, might be sold, to procure such additional furniture as might be necessary.

Mr. Harper contended that the sum was too small for so large and so elegant a household as was provided for that officer. Though the house was neither too large nor too elegant, yet the furniture was by no means sufficient to furnish it in that style it demanded. Perhaps, he said, the old furniture might procure 4000 dollars, which added to the 6000 dollars, and to that added 10,000 dollars, he would now move as an amendment to the bill, would amount to 20,000 dollars for furniture, which he believed was as small a quantity as would be any way adequate to that place.

Mr. Nicholas said the committee (of which he was one) had endeavored to procure the best possible information of the state of the furniture now in the house; they were well satisfied that the sum in hand which the bill proposed to expend, with the proceeds of sale from such as might be unfit, would be perfectly competent to that degree of fit which the manner of living of that officer could require. But, he said, it should despair of forming an agreement of opinion as to the sum requisite, without the certainty of file could be furnished in which it was desirable to support the President of the U. States.

Mr. S. Smith hoped the motion would not prevail. He could see no necessity whatever for more to be appropriated than the unexpected 6000 dollars proposed. In 18 years, he said, there had been 36,000 dollars used for this object. The present furniture, with what this money and the proceeds of the sale will procure, would make a very handsome quantity, and fully adequate to the wants of the house. From his observation in such parts of the house as were occupied, he could perceive no want of furniture nor elegance. When the gentleman spoke of the inadequacy of the sum, perhaps he wished to purchase plate, but as this was an article to which any sum of money whatever might be expended, he hoped it would not be applied to that purpose.

Mr. Craik differed in opinion with his colleague (Mr. Smith) that the style of the rooms now furnished was such as must be desirable. What he could be said when it was considered that the largest and most elegant rooms, were not yet furnished? But furniture must be procured for these apartments before the next session of congress, and it would certainly require much more money than was now proposed to be used upon it. If it was considered that the whole sum was very little more than was appropriated every 4 years, he hoped gentlemen would cease their objections to the 10,000 dollars proposed.

Mr. Macon believed the sum already appropriated to be adequate to all the style and elegance that officer would require. For his part he could see no more occasion for furnishing a house for the President than those of the heads of the departments; if he chose to live in style 25,000 dollars a year was quite sufficient to enable him to do it, and if he could not live upon that sum, he could not upon any 43,000 dollars had been appropriated for the President's furniture, 10,000 or more of which had been expended, but now in addition to the 6000 on hand, a gentleman wanted to put 10,000 more! For what, he would ask? If that sum was not enough, no sum whatever would be enough. He believed this sum would be sufficient for 50 years service, and he hoped the house would not now appropriate a further sum. If the style of the furniture was raised to very high, he should not be surprised soon if there was to be a proposition to make the salary a little more adequate to the file of the furniture, and raise that too, to bring him up to the file of his furniture.

Mr. Bayard wished not to extend it so far as the gentleman from South Carolina. Heretofore 14,000 dollars had been appropriated, he would propose to this 6000 dollars, and supposing the proceeds of the sales to amount to 3000 dollars, to add 5000 dollars, which would amount to 14,000, a medium which he considered sufficient.

Mr. Harper observed that the proceeds of the sales had usually been granted in addition to the money appropriated. He wished the sum of 10,000 dollars proposed, to be appropriated, however a objection was made, he was willing to modify it, and make it 8000 dollars, which with the six thou-

sand remaining, would make the usual sum of 14,000 dollars to which sum he hoped no gentleman would object.

Mr. Varnum reminded the committee that the fourteen thousand dollars first appropriated were to furnish an empty house; the furniture then purchased remained during the eight years of Gen. Washington's administration, and he believed no complaints of inadequacy were heard. At the close of his period of office, and before Mr. Adams came into office, 14,000 dollars more were appropriated, together with the proceeds of the sale of such as were unfashionable or decayed. He did not know that the amount of the sales was ascertained, but it was added in the purchase of new. To this was added the appropriation of last year to furnish the present house, all of which had not been expended. He always had supposed that the whole of these sums were intended solely for the providing of household furniture. It appeared, however, that this law had received a different construction by the President, than he had heard given to it by any gentleman on the floor; for in the inventory of furniture remaining on hand which had been supplied to the house, he saw an item of seven horses and a carriage, and even a market wagon, together with harness, &c. This plainly evinced that tho' the house had appropriated 15,000 dollars for household furniture, the President had thought himself authorized to purchase carriages, horses, and perhaps any thing which his convenience might suggest!

Mr. Macon said, the arguments of the gentleman from Delaware who had proposed a sum much more to his liking, because it was left, went to prove that 14,000 dollars must be appropriated every 4 years; but upon this principle there would be a great amount of furniture in a few years by these sums being heaped upon each other. Now, for his part, he was not willing to take away any thing of the 30,000 dollars which had been laid out, but he would even add to the remaining sum in hand, and surely this would be sufficient, though in his opinion there would be no necessity for it.

Mr. S. Smith thought gentlemen were not completely acquainted with the quantity or the kind of furniture which had been provided for that house. The articles which had been mentioned were certainly improper items in household furniture. He much disapproved of the manner in which the money had been laid out, and believed no gentleman could approve of it, as a compliance with the law. However, he had no idea of going into the subject at his time, lest it should lead him further than he would wish to go.

Mr. Harper said, the very argument used by the gentleman last up, carried the evidence of its own importance, for if of this sum much had been expended upon other objects, not household furniture, it proved that there was the more occasion for money to be appropriated for the purpose to which that ought to be applied. He knew of no subject to which the gentleman's observations were applied, otherwise than to evince his disposition to trample, very unworthily, indeed, upon those who are already fallen. He hoped, however, that this disposition would not excite the gentleman to withhold such measures as were necessary to carry into execution what was already begun.

Mr. S. Smith could not conceive how he had endeavored unworthily to trample upon the fallen. He replied upon no individual, nor did he know who was fallen, nor did he know the gentleman's meaning. To such persons as had been engaged in making this very improper selection of furniture, he did however refer. He meant to say that if this money had been laid out upon furniture, the house would have had a better appearance than at present, tho' at present he could see no deficiency.

Mr. Harper's motion for 8000 dollars was called and negatived.

Mr. Bayard's for 5000 shared the same fate. Mr. Harper moved 4000 which was carried in the same way, on which Mr. H. withdrew the amendment altogether. The bill was engrossed and passed its third reading during the session.

The amendments of the senate to the civil appropriation bill were taken up—only in committee. One was to insert 1000 dollars for the service of one extra clerk in the war and one in the treasury department, to supply the deficiencies of papers, occasioned by the recent fires—This was passed.

Mr. Platt moved to insert 11,885 dollars for additional compensation to the clerks in the executive and general post office departments.

Mr. Leib moved to strike out the sum so far as related to the war office. He had heard of no petition from them, and therefore supposed they were satisfied with their salaries.

Mr. Platt said, the clerks in that department were so confused, but as they were too late did actually send a letter to the committee, requesting to be included in the bill.

Mr. Griswold hoped, however, that their modesty would not be a bar to them, since indubitably their necessities must be the same. It should be remembered that these clerks, whilst in Philadelphia, had many opportunities of getting money by feasting hours, and other species of writing, after the office hours, of which they were here deprived. If therefore the salaries were but sufficient in Philadelphia, they must be inadequate here.

Mr. Leib thought that the chief clerk in the war office would have not shewed much modesty indeed if he joined for an increase of salary, for from his present occupations he got 1700 dollars a year, which certainly must be sufficient for his services and necessities.

Mr. Gallatin was in favor of some additional being made to the salaries, although he confessed some of them had sufficient, but at present he thought it would be improper to discriminate. The salaries as present were from 1200 dollars to 600, some few were at 500. These unequal divisions of salary, and the occasional surplus monies distributed at the pleasure of the secretaries, he wished to see brought upon a more equal and permanent footing, but as the period of the session would not admit of such a regulation he thought it would be best for the ensuing year to allow a per centage of about 10 per cent. upon the present salaries. This would certainly be sufficient

to meet the difference of living between Philadelphia and Philadelphia. The sum proposed was 15 per cent. upon the salaries, but 10 per cent. he thought sufficient.

Mr. Leib withdrew his motion, on an explanation taking place.

Mr. Craik hoped the sum of 15 per cent. addition would be allowed. He believed that market in Philadelphia was cheaper than here, and that here expenses were higher; for, from the distance the officers were from Georgetown, nearer than which the greatest number of the clerks could not be accommodated, they were often obliged to hire hacks, and some of them had engaged them by the year. He believed the clerks now in place were very adequate to their duty and it was a desirable thing to keep them by suitable increases, without which the public business might remain undone, or done with less exactness.

Mr. Macon had often heard of the great danger of losing persons of talents and not getting others in the place of them, if the salary was too low, but he believed the principle was a false one. He believed there never was a vacancy, but there were plenty of applicants to fill it from, and the public business never suffered from it as he had heard of. He had not found that difference of living between Georgetown and Philadelphia which some gentlemen apprehended. He rather thought that living was somewhat cheaper at Georgetown than at Philadelphia, and therefore there could be no occasion for advancing salaries from that cause. He hoped the whole of it would be agreed to; he believed the government would not suffer from it.

Mr. Gallatin moved to strike out 15 per cent. and insert 10 per cent. which was carried, and he then moved to amend the bill.

Motion made to insert the assistant post-master general, but from the suggestion that the salary of that officer was not fixed by law, it was withdrawn.

Three hundred dollars addition was made to the salary of the chief clerk of the navy department, by which that salary was made 1500 dollars, in uniformity with that of the chief clerks of the other departments.

Mr. Macon made report from the committee of claims, for the postponement of several petitions, and for the discharge of that committee. This was agreed to and the papers returned to one of the petitioners, Joseph Hodgson, who prayed some caution for the loss of his house, (the late war office) destroyed by fire whilst occupied by the government.

The house took up the amendments of the senate to the bill to erect a museum to George Washington. The amendments were to strike out mutilation, and insert monuments; to strike out 200,000, and to insert 50,000 dollars, to strike out the responsibility of the heads of the departments and to insert John Marshall, Bushrod, Washington, Tobias, Lear, and John E. Howard, clerks, conforming the bill thereto.

Mr. Harper moved to amend the amendments of the senate, by retaining a system somewhat similar to that agreed upon in the house, after mature deliberation and discussion; he wished a tomb, to which the house had given the name mausoleum to prevail, in preference to a monument. He objected to the use of another ground, and that was to the manner in which the expenditure of the money was to be furnished.—First, however, he would move to strike out 50,000 dollars, and insert 100,000. He was not possessed of a very accurate statement of the expense of monuments, but he was certain this sum was extremely inadequate. 100,000 dollars would be barely sufficient; he believed even to erect a monument of the second grade, such as Westminster Abbey was adorned with an hundred of, in commemoration of some brilliant action in a campaign, or of some victory achieved by an admiral of a fleet 50,000 dollars would not erect a monument of more than two figures in stature, and surely it would not be desirable to degrade the nation by this conduct, which he could not avoid calling little, and unworthy the efforts of a great nation to carry down to posterity, the great actions of its greatest men. It mattered not to the same whom it was intended to commemorate, he would ever live upon the hearts and in the remembrance of a grateful people, but for the credit of the nation, who made the feeble attempt, he wished to avoid the censure which surely would attach to conduct such as this respecting such a person.

The yeas and nays were called upon striking out 50,000 dollars, to insert 100,000.

YEAS.—Messrs. Baer, Bartlett, Bayard, J. Brown, Craik, Dana, F. Davenport, Dennis, Dickson, Evans, Foster, G. N. C. Goodrich, H. Griswold, Grove, Harper, Henderson, Hill, Huger, Kitters, H. Lee, S. Lee, Mattoon, Page, Packney, Platt, Powell, N. Reed, J. C. Smith, Sheate, Sheer, J. C. Thomas, L. Williams, Woods—34.

NAYS.—Messrs. Allison, Bailey, Bid. Bishop, R. Brown, Cabell, Champlin, Christie, Clay, Claiborne, J. Davenport, Davis, Dawson, Edmond, Eggleston, Foster, Gallatin, Gregg, Hanna, Heister, Holmes, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Linn, Livingston, Macon, Muhlenberg, New, Nicholas, Nicholson, Randolph, Reed, Shepard, Smilie, J. Smith, S. Smith, Spaight, Stanford, Stone, Sumpter, Stewart, Tallalero, Tenney, Thomas A. Trigg, J. Trigg, Varnum, Wadsworth—41.

Mr. Harper then moved to strike out the names in the bill, and to insert the four heads of the executive departments—his reason for this was grounded on the nature of the duty, and the of a constitutional kind. He considered the expenditure of monies for a national object was an executive and therefore none but executive officers of the government could do it consistent with the constitution which commanded in the first section, second clause, that "the executive power shall be vested in the President of the United States," and "his executive act, it ought to be speed immediately under the control of the president of the States.

Mr. Bayard objected to the amendment, he believed it consistent with the constitution, and other delegations which had been made.