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LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Thursday, Jan. 8.

This day at twelve, both Houses of the Legislature convened in the Representatives' Chamber. Soon after, His Excellency the Governor, attended by the Sheriff and Council, entered, and delivered the following

SPEECH:

Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives.

Through the favor of Providence, we are again assembled to perform those public services, to which we owe the confidence which our constituents have reposed in us, our endeavors to employ the authority, with which we are entrusted, in promoting the honor and safety of the state, and the improvement and happiness of our fellow citizens. Permit me, Gentlemen, to assure you, that no care shall be wanting on my part to contribute, as far as possible, to the attainment of these essential objects.

The board of Visitors of the State Prison, have lately published an account of that Institution, containing the law of the State providing for the regulation of the Prison; the rules prescribed by the Governor and Council, for its superintendance and management, in pursuance of the authority given them by law; the orders established by the board of visitors, for the support and employment of the prisoners; and a general view of the state of the prison. The members of the Legislature will be furnished with copies of this publication. A particular statement will also be laid before the General Court of all the expenses and disbursements, attending the establishment, the amount of monies received, and of articles manufactured and sold, and the amount of labor and expense in each department, with the quantity of stock, tools and materials on hand. From these documents, the Legislature will be fully informed of the manner in which the affairs of the prison have been conducted, and will be able to point out any alteration, which may have a tendency to promote the design of the institution.

The agents appointed by an order of the two Houses, on the 20th of last June, to settle and adjust the accounts of the Treasurer of the Commonwealth, and to transfer the books and property of the public, in that office, to the present Treasurer, have accordingly made a statement; and in compliance with the order, have reported a statement thereof to the Governor and Council, which will be laid before you by the Secretary.

He will also deliver you the Annual Return, from the Adjutant General, of the Militia of the Commonwealth; and the Quarter Master General's Returns of the Ordinance and Military stores, belonging to this state.

You will perceive by the Treasurer's account, which will be laid before you, in a few days, that a vigilant and frugal administration of the public revenue is necessary to defray the expenses of the Commonwealth, and to discharge what remains due to its creditors. Notwithstanding the frequent reductions of our state debt, since the close of the war in which it was incurred, it still amounts to 856,000 dollars, the interest of which at 5 per cent. has for a number of years been regularly paid. I think you will endeavor to provide for the redemption of the principal, as soon as conveniently may be; and that you will be solicitous to effect this object, without increasing the usual public taxes. The same account from the Treasury will exhibit the demands in favor of the Commonwealth, and the other means we possess of discharging the debt.

Unless the creditors prefer a continuance of the loan at the rate of interest to which they are now entitled, the policy as well as justice of delaying to make payment, whenever it is in our power to do it, may be doubted. A wise government will always consider probity and good faith in performing their engagements, as the most valuable treasure they possess, and the most certain resource in all the exigencies to which a community is exposed.

The strength of a Republic consists in the mutual dependence and agreement of its several parts. As consciousness of their individual wants, and weakness unites the members among themselves, in the bond of common interest; and so long as a firm and sincere regard to the common good prevails, it renders the Republic invincible, and enables it to maintain its liberty and independence against all its enemies.—If the state, while in this condition, is threatened with any injury from abroad, the private quarrels and party disputes of citizens are suspended by the love of their country and

the fear of common danger. They immediately unite and are eager to perform the duty of their respective functions.

It is evident, therefore, that the security of every free state, depends on the virtues of the individuals who compose it; and every individual is concerned and may be useful in promoting the general safety.—Let it then, gentlemen, be our care to do all that is incumbent upon us. Let us attend to the organization and discipline of the Militia, so far as these duties are assigned to the several states. Let us guard against those divisions and that foreign influence which have proved fatal to all other Republics. Let us endeavor to unite the people in friendship and mutual confidence, and show, by our example, the same moderation and candor, and the same reverence for the laws, that we expect from our fellow citizens; and let us cheerfully contribute whatever the national government may think necessary for the protection of our commerce and the complete defence of our territorial rights.

CALEB STONG.

Jan. 8, 1837.

Congress.

House of Representatives.

MONDAY, JAN. 19.

Mr. J. Randolph, from the committee appointed to carry to the President the resolution of the House adopted on Friday, stated that the committee had performed that service, and had received for answer from the President, that he would cause the information requested, to be laid before the House.

Mr. Quincy presented the petition of James Sullivan and others, claimants of certain lands ceded to the U. S. by Georgia, requesting that the tribunals of the U. S. may be authorized to try the question of right to those lands.

Mr. Quincy moved a reference of this petition to a committee of the whole House.

Mr. Eppes spoke against the reference.

Mr. Quincy replied.

The question was taken, on referring the petition to a committee of the whole, which was disagreed to—Ayes 41—Noes 54.

Mr. Quincy then moved his reference to a select committee.

Mr. D. R. Williams hoped this motion would not prevail, and that if it did not, that the petition would be rejected.

Mr. Quincy withdrew his motion, that the question might be taken on the proposition to reject the petition, which Mr. D. R. Williams then offered.

Mr. Quincy called for the yeas and nays on this motion.

Messrs. D. R. Williams, Eppes and J. Clay supported; and Messrs. Conrad, Cook, Alexander, Sloan, Smilie and Quincy opposed the motion, which was disagreed to—Yeas 53—Nays 56.

Mr. Quincy then moved a reference of the petition to a select committee.

Mr. Quincy advocated; and Messrs. J. May, Smilie, R. Nelson and Eppes opposed this motion, which was likewise disagreed to—yeas 45, nays 65.

Mr. Rhea of Ten. offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to enquire into the expediency of laying off and describing by certain metes and boundaries a tract of country to which the Indian title has been extinguished, within the limits of the territory of Louisiana, and to include all the settlements within the said territory, and for having the said tracts of country laid off into townships and sections, half and quarter sections, agreeably to the several laws heretofore made for surveying the public lands of the U. S. and also to enquire into the expediency of granting one quarter section to free male white, who now resides thereon, or who within

years shall actually improve and reside thereon.

Mr. Conrad said, before he agreed to the resolution, he should be glad to hear the reasons for this new mode of disposing of the public lands.

Mr. Rhea said he did not suppose that on referring this subject, it would have been necessary to assign the reasons for the measure. But as they had been called for, he would state some of them. It was well known that the settlements in the territory of Louisiana were scattered—that they were two or three hundred miles apart. If the Indians should become hostile in that quarter it would probably cost the U. S. more to protect these settlements than the value of the land it was proposed by the resolution to allow to settlers. The object was to effect the settlement that

would prove a strong barrier, and avert the necessity of maintaining a standing army. The lands on this side of the Mississippi, it was well known, from their subjection to Indian claims, would not probably be settled until a distant day; and this produced a necessity for forming settlements on the western side of that river.

Mr. Smilie believed this was a measure that would be attended with great benefits to the U. S. As the motion was merely to refer for the purpose of enquiry, he hoped it would not be opposed.

Mr. Varnum was of the opinion that even if this measure should be ultimately considered advisable, this was a very unseasonable time for its adoption. He was not of opinion that any considerable force could be brought to bear on the frontier thus proposed to be guarded. It would be remarked that it was not contemplated for the defence of the Orleans, but the Louisiana territory. And he asked whether it would be proper to adopt it while such various reports prevailed of the existence of conspiracies against the U. S. in the western country. Might not the individuals, engaged in these combinations, on their discomfiture and return into the U. S. under this measure, occupy the lands thus proposed to be surveyed.

Mr. Rhea declared himself greatly surprised at the suggestion of the gentleman from Massachusetts. As to the suspicious float, he hoped they would have no influence on the adoption of this measure.

Mr. Gregg hoped, as the resolution contemplated an almost radical change of the land system, it would be suffered to lie for consideration.

Mr. Rhea acquiesced in this course.

The bill from the Senate, supplementary to the act fixing the military peace establishment of the U. S. was read the first time.

Mr. Eppes moved to reject it.

On this motion a debate of about two hours ensued.

Messrs. Eppes, Varnum, Smilies, G. W. Campbell and Bedinger supported; and Messrs. Lyon, Tallmadge, Early, Fidelity, Gregg, Cool, Elmer, Alexander and Thomas Moore opposed the motion, which was disagreed to—Yeas 26, Nays 95.

The bill then had a second reading, and was referred to a select committee composed of Messrs. J. Randolph, Chandler, Dickson, Gregg and Van Cortlandt.

TUESDAY, JAN. 20.

Mr. Bedinger, from the committee to whom was recommitting the bill prohibiting the importation of slaves into the U. S. reported a new bill, which was made the order for Friday.

The bill continuing for a further time the bill prohibiting commercial intercourse between the U. S. and certain ports in St. Domingo, was read the third time, and passed without a division.

The bill providing for the survey of the coast of the U. S. was read a third time, and passed—A yeas 80.

A bill providing for the erection of sundry light houses, &c. was passed through committee of the whole, and ordered to a third reading.

The House again went into committee of the whole—Mr. Tenny in the chair, on the bill making a donation of land for building a hospital at Natchez, &c.

The section, extending the right of suffrage to the citizens of the territory, without the qualification of a freehold, was again read.

Mr. Bidwell advocated this section on the ground of expediency, and defended it against the charge of being repugnant to the compact between the U. S. and the state of Georgia. He maintained that the stipulations of the ordinance for the North Western Territory, were of two kinds—some of which could only be altered by the compact of the two parties, while the others were alterable by Congress alone. The parties, contemplated by the ordinance, were the U. S. and the people of the Mississippi Territory, and not the U. S. and the state of Georgia; that, however, the stipulation, which bore on this case, was one which was revocable by Congress alone.

Mr. Early contended on the other hand that the parties to the compact were the U. S. and the state of Georgia; and that its stipulations could not be altered without the consent of both. He said, he had no doubt if application should be made to the state of Georgia, her consent would be cheerfully given to the modification proposed.

Mr. Lattimore maintained the same principle with Mr. Bidwell.

Only 15 members rising in favor of striking out the section, the motion was lost.

Mr. Early moved to strike out the first section, which applies a tract of land towards the erection of a hospital at Natchez.

Mr. Early observed that, agreeably to the articles of cession by Georgia to the U. S. it was stipulated that 1,200,000 dollars should be paid by the U. S. to the state of Georgia out of the first proceeds of the ceded lands that should be sold.

Mr. Lattimore enforced the propriety of the grant for an institution loudly called for not on local but general considerations, as the city of Natchez was known to be resorted to by more emigrants from all other parts of the U. S. than any other place of its size. He also remarked, to show that the objection of the gentleman from Georgia was invalid, that a part of these lands had been already made for the purpose of a university.

Mr. Boutwell spoke in favor of the motion which was agreed to—Ayes 43, Noes 30.

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 23.

A bill authorizing the erection of certain light houses and the fixing of flukes, buoys, and beacons at certain places therein named, was read the third time and passed without a division.

A bill authorizing a grant of land for the use of a hospital at Natchez, allowing additional compensation to the judges of the Mississippi territory, and extending the right of suffrage therein, was read the third time and passed—Ayes 54, Nays 31—and the title amended by striking out the words in italics.

Mr. Holmes, from the committee of claims, offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That the committee of claims be directed to enquire into the expediency of making compensation to the governor, judges and secretary of the Indiana territory, for extra services rendered by them in organizing the government of Indiana, and that they have leave to report by bill otherwise.

The House concurred in this motion.

FRIDAY, JAN. 25.

The House resolved itself into a committee of the whole—Mr. Matters in the chair—on the report of a select committee on so much of the message of the President as relates to the fortifications of ports and harbors.

The resolutions reported by the committee were as follows:

Resolved, That a sum of money not exceeding _____ dollars, be appropriated to enable the President of the United States to cause our fortifications to be improved and repaired.

Resolved, That a further sum of money not exceeding _____ dollars be appropriated to enable the President of the U. S. to cause to be built a number of gun boats, not exceeding _____ for the better protection of our ports, towns and rivers.

Mr. Mumford, Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a motion to which I impelled by the strongest conviction on my mind, that it is of primary importance to the peace, the honor, the safety and the welfare of this nation, we should adopt some more efficient measures in defence of our own sea coast. It is no doubt within the recollection of every member of this committee that in the month of April last, a most unwarrantable outrage was committed against the peace and dignity of the United States, within your own jurisdiction, by the commander of a certain British ship of war, called the Leander, who, in open contempt of your laws, and the violation of the laws of nations, did actually commit murder on one of your own citizens, within your own limits, near the port of New York, without provocation on his part, when in the lawful prosecution of his business.

However difficult it may be notwithstanding our earnest desire to devise some more efficient means which I hope will soon take place to relieve a worthy class of our citizens from the cruel bondage and the degrading whip of a man of war, is not this humiliation sufficient? Must we still be called upon to duck up the dregs? Will the United States submit to the humiliating degradation of having its own citizens murdered within its own limits, without making an effort and taking such strong ground as will prevent in future the repetition of the like crimes? No sir; this nation will not submit to it; Sir, we have had insult added to injury, and notwithstanding the Cambrian frigate has been denied the rights of hospitality by the President's proclamation in consequence of her participation in the murder of one of your citizens, yet a few days ago it appears another of your citizens has been seized by the commander of that frigate with force of arms and threatened at the peril of his life, that if he did not safely conduct that ship, contrary to the laws of his country, from Cape Henry into Hampton roads, he would blow