

LEGISLATIVE DEBATES.

SPEECH OF MR. RAYNER, OF HARTFORD.

On the Bill to provide for the establishment of a State Hospital for the Insane in North Carolina; delivered in the House of Commons, December 21st, 1848.

Mr. R. said, that in contributing his humble aid towards the accomplishment of the purpose proposed by the Bill before the House, he could truly say he never performed a more agreeable duty, as a public man, it accorded with his views of duty...

In this age of discovery and improvement, with the recorded experience of so many countries, and such a length of time, it would be hard to find a single instance in which the insane, with buildings and fixtures erected with a peculiar view to the purposes contemplated, and under the control and management of those exclusively devoted to such duties, are better calculated to restore those who are not incurable, and to administer to the comfort of those who are, than any other system ever devised.

These statistical data prove conclusively, that in most cases, insanity proceeds from physical disease, acting through neglect or improper treatment upon the natural functions of the brain. How apparent then, must it be to every one, who has witnessed much of the sufferings, and difficulty of treatment of mere physical disease, that this malady of the mind, depending in a great degree on physical derangement, requires a degree of care, of knowledge, of unremitting attention, of peculiar capacity, and of those qualities, which are not to be met in the ordinary physician.

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Experience, that neither those precepts carry proof, and frequently conviction, in their very utterance, but established beyond controversy, that facts, which bear the stamp of physical restraint, and personal severity, instead of relieving, only tend to aggravate the tortures of the maniac. The mind of man, whether sane or insane, whether aspiring in its loftiest flight to the sublime and the faithful, or whether clouded in its vision by the dark curtain of despair, is but one being, and that being human, formed in the image of God, and nothing short of the fiat of heaven can chain it down to earth. Deprive it, in its dark state of gloom, of those genial influences which nature alone, aided by those heavenly qualities of gentleness and sympathy...

Whilst the balance of the christian world is moving on in these noble enterprises, shall North Carolina, our native land, stand the ashes, our fathers, and our children, in the midst of arms and slumbering eyelids? Shall our people longer bear the reproach of insensibility to human who; or of nigardliness, in refusing to grant a pittance of that bounty which kind heaven has bestowed on the children of men?

At the knock of distress, or the tale of disaster. Although we may not boast of our populous Cities and Commercial Marinas; although we may not have as many proud Seminaries of learning; although we may not cover our surface with a net-work of Rail-roads and canals; yet let us prove that we have hearts to feel for the unfortunate, and that we are not proud, and that we are somewhat regardless of their public pride and prosperity.

But that hereafter, some blood of misery, in whose veins shall flow the same blood that now pulsates in our hearts, may be incarcerated in the felon's dungeon, wear the chain fetters of confinement, and vent their wails and muffled cries to prison walls? In the dispensation of Providence this may well be our duty, and we are appealed to not only by the consideration of patriotic pride, of representative duty, and of an expanded benevolence and christian philanthropy, but we are appealed to by what may be termed the sufferings of our own flesh and blood, to act, and to act promptly.

As to the method proposed in the bill before us, of raising the money necessary to erect a State institution, by a slight increase of the tax on real estate and on polls, I think it eminently proper, and far the most sure and practicable. 'Tis true, it falls upon all classes and interests in society. And it is right that it should not only be so, but that every one should be allowed to contribute in proportion to his ability, to what will belong to all. It is right that the poor man as well as the rich should feel that having aided in its establishment, he and his children have a vested interest in its benefits.

I am aware it may be said, there is no pressing necessity for our founding an institution for the insane in this State; inasmuch as the number of such institutions is confined within our limits, and conveniences for the relief of the afflicted amount to us. The mere statement of this objection carries its own refutation with it. In the first place, our State pride should revolt at this idea of dependence upon the liberality and benevolence of our sister States.

In the third place, this dependence on the institutions of other States, considered as a question of political economy, is a question of the highest importance. It carries the money and that to no considerable extent, from our borders; not to come back to us through the regular channels of commercial exchange, but keeping up in proportion to its expenditure, a constant drain on our circulating medium, the current of which has no other outlet than the State Treasury. It is the duty of the Legislature to provide for the corporal wants of the poor, how much greater the obligation to provide for their mental suffering. For, what are hunger, nakedness and want compared with the loss of reason?

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PROCEEDINGS OF OUR STATE LEGISLATURE.

TUESDAY, JAN. 9. SENATE. Mr. Miller presented a memorial on the subject of County Courts, which was referred. Mr. Patterson, from the Joint Select Committee on the bill to amend the act which relates to the State, reported a bill which he introduced. The Senate proceeded to the unfinished business, and the supplementary bill to divide the County of Stokes, passed its 3d reading.

Mr. Caldwell, of Burke, introduced a resolution in relation to the contested election from Surry giving the sitting member until the 23d, to take decisions. Mr. Person, of Moore, offered an amendment to the resolution, by striking out 23d, and insert 19th. On this there was a short discussion between the mover, and Messrs. Caldwell, of Burke, Stanley, Oglesby and Keene—the amendment was rejected.

Mr. Spicer, in relation to the late Sheriff of Onslow. Mr. Halsey, a resolution providing for a recess from half past one till three o'clock. Adopted. Mr. Gilmer, a bill in relation to honest debtors. Referred. Mr. Hawkins, a bill to extend the corporate limits of the town of Warrenton, with a protest. Referred.

Mr. Washington, a bill to amend the Revised Statutes relating to bills, bonds, promissory notes, &c. Referred. Mr. Smau, to incorporate Bear Creek Canal Company. Passed its 2d reading. On motion of Mr. Woodfin, Mr. Lillington was added to the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Woodfin, from the Judiciary Committee, reported the bill to incorporate the town of Goldsboro; also, a bill supplementary to the act establishing a State Hospital for the Insane; also, a bill to amend the 65th chapter of Revised Statutes; also, the bill making more suitable provision for females covert, with an amendment. These reports lie over. Mr. Albright introduced a resolution respecting Weights and Measures in Chatham County. Mr. Spicer, in relation to the late Sheriff of Onslow.

Mr. Halsey, a resolution providing for a recess from half past one till three o'clock. Adopted. Mr. Gilmer, a bill in relation to honest debtors. Referred. Mr. Hawkins, a bill to extend the corporate limits of the town of Warrenton, with a protest. Referred.

lay off a road from Wilkes to Ashe. Passed its 2d reading. Mr. Courts, from the Committee on Propositions and Grievances, to which was referred the petition of James Nixon, praying that the prayer of the petitioner be granted. Concurred in.

Mr. Smith, from the Committee on Private Bills, reported favorably to the bill to incorporate a Masonic Lodge in the County of Stokes. Passed its 2d reading. Also, favorably to the bill to repeal in part an act of Revised Statutes, Chapter 16. Passed its 2d reading. Also, unfavorably to the resolution allowing Joshua Patterson to erect two gates across a Public road in Surry County and to be exempted from taxation on same.

Mr. Keene moved the indefinite postponement of the bill, and addressed the House in opposition to it, denouncing it as a question fraught with the direst evils. Mr. Hicks spoke briefly in favor of his amendment. Mr. Barringer inquired of Mr. Keene if he voted for the Hon. D. S. Reid, in the August elections.

Mr. Keene replied that he did, but because his opinions and those of the Hon. D. S. Reid accorded on other political questions. The question was then taken on the motion for indefinite postponement, and decided in the negative by a large majority.

Mr. Rayner then took the floor, and was speaking when the Speaker announced recess. Mr. Scott, from the Committee to superintend the election of Judge, reported that Battle had received 123 votes, Dobbin 16, Strange 2, Biggs 4, Hall 1, Rodman 1, C. Edney 1, Graves 4, Whitaker 1, Craige 1. Hon. W. H. Battle was therefore declared duly elected. The House then took recess.

Mr. Drake, from the Committee on Finance, reported a bill to amend the Rev. Stat. relating to Roads. Mr. Woodfin, from the Judiciary Committee, reported the bill to incorporate the town of Goldsboro; also, a bill supplementary to the act establishing a State Hospital for the Insane; also, a bill to amend the 65th chapter of Revised Statutes; also, the bill making more suitable provision for females covert, with an amendment. These reports lie over.

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On motion of Mr. Woodfin, Mr. Lillington was added to the Judiciary Committee. The Senate proceeded to the unfinished business, being the Wilmington and Raleigh Railroad bill, the pending question being on Mr. Wort's motion to postpone the bill until the 23d inst. Mr. Joyner took the floor in opposition to this motion, and went into the merits of the bill, sustaining and enforcing reasons for its passage. He was replied to by Mr. Wort, who stated that he opposed the bill, not because he did not believe it right and necessary, but because he wished to act upon broader grounds. His views were that we should establish great works of Internal Improvements; and when we lend aid to one work, we should lend to all.

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