

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

January 25.

A message in writing from the President of the U. States was received and read as follows:

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

I communicate for the information of congress, the report of the director of the Mint, of the operations of that institution for the last year.

(Signed)

TH: JEFFERSON.

The letter and report were ordered to be printed.

Mr Leib from the committee appointed on that subject, reported a bill making an appropriation for the completion of the Arsenal belonging to the United States on the banks of the Schuylkill, to the amount of 18 900 dollars, which was read twice, and referred to the committee of the whole for Monday.

Mr. Crowninshield moved that the committee of ways and means be directed to enquire what alterations are necessary in the laws fixing the salaries and emolument of the collectors of duties on import and tonnage, which motion was carried in the affirmative.

Mr. Southam presented the petition of Cuthbert Simmonds of the 1st regiment of the Virginia line commanded by col. Grayson, and who was disabled from doing duty for a considerable time, by a strain he got on his marching from the southward in 1775, which strain has rendered him incapable of procuring support for himself, his wife and children, praying relief.

Referred to the committee of the whole, who have that subject before them.

Mr. Findly presented a memorial from a number of the inhabitants of the counties of Jefferson and Belmont in the state of Ohio county in Virginia, recommending a particular course for the road intended to be laid out from the district of Columbia through the state of Ohio. On motion the memorial was referred to the committee of the whole, who have that subject before them.

Mr. Lattimore presented a memorial from the legislative council and the house of representatives of the Mississippi territory stating sundry grievances to which they were exposed by the act of congress for the government of the same. They complain that man is not qualified to vote unless he possess fifty acres of land, whereby those who hold houses and town lots as well as respectable citizens of considerable personal estate are disfranchised.—The inequality of representation in the several counties to the number of inhabitants in each.—The necessity of extending the powers and authorities of an additional judge lately furnished the territory.—The inconveniences arising from the prescribed mode of the disposal of lands.—The necessity of establishing an Hospital at the Natchez, and lastly an increase of the salaries of the judges. On motion the memorial was referred to a select committee of five members.

Mr. Macon (Speaker) presented a petition which had been inclosed to him from Edwin Lewis, the legal representative of Henry Maul, complaining certain acts of the commissioners of the Mississippi Territory with which he was dissatisfied: On motion this petition was referred to the last mentioned committee.

A message from the Senate by Mr. Otis their secretary, informing that the senate had passed an act concerning the mode of surveying the public lands of the United States to which they request the concurrence of the house. The act was read twice and referred to a committee of two.

Mr. Snille presented a petition from a number of purchasers of the public lands of the United States in the state of Ohio, under the laws of congress.

Referred to the committee appointed on the sale of public lands of the United States in the state of Ohio.

Mr. R. Griswold after stating at some length the provisions made by the several laws of the United States, respecting the duties on the importation of goods, wares and merchandize into the United States, and endeavoring to shew that salt-petre had been particularly exempted from the payment of duties, under most of them, but that lately the comptroller of the treasury had directed the like duties to be taken upon the importation as upon other ad valorem goods.—He regretted that a difference existed on this point.—his own opinion as well as that of several eminent civilians being the reverse, he moved that the committee of ways and means be instructed to enquire whether salt-petre is at this liable by law to a duty on the importation thereof into the United States if liable to a duty, what is the rate thereof, and whether it is not expedient to design by law the duty to be paid hereafter on that article.

After some consideration of the subject, the motion was agreed to.

A message from the senate, by Mr. Otis, their secretary, was received, informing that the senate had agreed to the bill relating to the valuation of houses, lands and slaves, in South Carolina, under the United States direct tax—also to the act supplementary to an act, entitled an act to regulate the collection of duties on imports and tonnage, with an amendment, to which they request the concurrence of the house.

On motion of Mr. J. Clay, the amendment of the senate to the last mentioned bill was referred to the committee of the whole on Monday next.

Mr. Crowninshield called for the order of the day on the bill for the relief of the sufferers by the late fire at New York. The motion being agreed to, the house took into consideration the amendment proposed by Mr. Early, and agreed to in committee of the whole, for extending the like relief to those who suffered by the storm of the 8th September last, in the ports of Savannah, Beaufort, Charleston and Georgetown in South-Carolina.

The motion being expressly to strike out Georgia & South Carolina, for the purpose of particularizing the ports intended to be relieved, viz. Savannah, Beaufort, Charleston and Georgetown, a division of this question was called for, and the question being put in striking out it was carried in the affirmative. The remainder of the motion, viz. shall the above mentioned ports be inserted, passed in the negative, so there stood a blank in the bill without a connexion. It was then suggested that it would be proper to extend this relief all along the coast where sufferings had taken place. But this being exposed as too extensive and likely to defeat the bill altogether,

On motion of Mr. Parly, the amendment was referred to a committee of the whole for the purpose of restoring into the state it was in before it was thus mangled. The motion of reference was carried for Monday next.

Mr. G. W. Campbell called for the order of the day on the resolution authorising the establishment of a post road from Knoxville in Tennessee to the settlements on the Tombigbee river, and so on to New Orleans.

On the question will the house resolve itself into a committee accordingly—it passed in the negative.

Mr. Stanford moved to discharge the committee of the whole, with a view of referring the subject to the committee on post office and post roads.

Mr. Newton wished the subject to remain in its present state, until the information which the house had requested of the president was received.

Mr. G. W. Campbell thought the subject not a proper one for the committee on post offices and post roads, and gentlemen might recollect that such a motion had been made when the subject was first introduced, and it then failed of success; he hoped the like fate would attend the present motion. It would be recollected that the information alluded to by his friend from Virginia, had been requested seven weeks since, and he presumed was not yet to be procured, nor perhaps might it be during the session; he hoped however the house would agree to proceed to the examination of the subject.

Mr. Gregg thought it would be as well to refer it to the committee of the whole on the bill directing

the application of a certain sum of money out of the proceeds of the sale of western lands for opening certain roads.

Mr. Stanford observed the subjects were not similar, as there was not a material difference between the useful roads through a country for carrying its produce to market, and a main post road like the one under contemplation.

The question on the motion to discharge the committee of the whole, was lost without a division.

Mr. Nelson reminded the house that they had done him the honor of electing him one of the managers for conducting the trial of judge Chase, and asked permission to inform them, that his private business and domestic affairs were so circumstanced, that he should be forced to be absent from Saturday or Sunday was a week, during at least the ensuing fortnight. Under this peculiar pressure, he begged leave to decline his appointment as a manager. He mentioned this subject in order to apprise the house, that if they considered another member necessary, by excusing him now upon his request, they might have sufficient time to appoint another.

On motion to excuse Mr. Nelson from serving as a manager, it was agreed to.

Mr. Dana called for the order of the day, on the report of the committee of claims, respecting the Yazoo claims to lands. He did this, that at the time of adjournment, it might be considered as the unfinished business, and might have the preference over every other order on Monday. It would be recollected, that the report was made last week, and fixed as the order of the day for Monday last, but he had forborne to call it up till this time, in order that gentlemen, after having had the printed reports so long in their hands, might be prepared to meet the discussion, if not the decision.

Mr. Newton was about observing that the subject was too important to be taken up in a thin house, and if gentlemen looked round they would perceive most of the seats vacant.

He was here reminded by the speaker, that no debate could take place on the priority of business. If gentlemen were not prepared to go into committee of the whole, they would vote against the present motion.

Mr. Newton said since that was the case he would move to adjourn.

The motion to adjourn being decided in the negative.

The speaker put the question on going into committee of the whole on the report.

On a division there were 47 in the affirmative, and 42 in the negative, the motion was of course carried.

Mr. Varnum in the chair.

The chairman proceeded to read the report, and when he had gone through a small part of it.

Mr. Clarke moved the committee should rise.

On the question for the committee rising there were 50 in the affirmative, and 43 against it, it was carried.

The committee hereupon rose and reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

On granting leave to sit again, there was fifty three in the affirmative, and the speaker declared that in his opinion, the question was carried.

Mr. Claiborne suggested the propriety of proceeding to ballot for a manager in the place of Mr. Nelson, excused.

Mr. J. Randolph thought it would take up too much time at this late hour, and might as well be done to-morrow, or on Monday.

Mr. Claiborne, supposing some other business was about to be introduced by his colleague, Mr. J. Randolph, withdrew his motion.

Mr. J. Randolph reported from the committee appointed on the petition of a number of the planters, merchants and others of Louisiana, a report of considerable length concluding with a resolution that provision ought to be made by law for extending to the people of Louisiana the right of self government.

On motion of Mr. J. R. the report was referred to a committee of whole, and made the order of the day for Monday next.

Mr. Morrow presented two petitions, one from Thomas Orr, the other from Joseph Walker praying congress to allow them certain sections of land, they had settled upon and improved. Referred to the committee on the subject of the disposal of the public lands appointed the 7th inst.

The order of the day for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole on the report of the committee of revision and unfinished business, was taken up.

Mr. Gregg in the chair.

The first resolution for reviving and making permanent the law for regulating the mode of taking testimony in cases of contested elections was agreed to.

The second resolution for renewing the charter of Washington city being under consideration.

Dr. Leib observed that it would be unnecessary to act on this subject at the present time, as the law of last session has extended the duration of the charter to 15 years.

On the question the committee disagreed to the last resolution.

The committee then rose and reported.

The house immediately considered and concurred in the report of the committee of the whole. And the first resolution was referred to the committee of revision and unfinished business to report a bill for the purpose.

Mr. M'Creery from the committee appointed for the purpose reported a bill declaring the assent of congress to the act of Maryland of December 28, 1793, allowing a health office at Baltimore.

The bill being twice read.

On motion of Dr. Lieb it was referred to a committee of the whole for Monday next.

Mr. Root from the committee appointed for the purpose reported a bill authorising the discharge of John York from his imprisonment. The same was twice read and referred to a committee of the whole on Monday next.

Mr. Dana called up the report of the committee of claims on the petition of Margaret Ralston, widow of captain Ralston; late one of the inspectors of the port of Philadelphia, which recongnised that she have leave to withdraw her petition.

The report was agreed to by the house.

Adjourned.