

Executive Speech
of
Isaac Tichenor
As it appears in the
RECORDS
OF THE
GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL
OF THE
STATE OF VERMONT.

Volume IV.

1801

Speech of Gov. Tichenor – 1801.

Gentlemen of the Council & Gentlemen of the house of Representatives:

In a state regulated in its expenditures by the strictest rules of economy, the public approbation must be the principal reward of its magistrates. That I have the honor of addressing you again, as your Chief Magistrate, evidences the confidence of the Freemen in my past conduct, and urges to active and zealous pursuit of their best welfare.

The Constitution of this State, under which we are now assembled, is happily formed on the principles of freedom, and has, for its object, the interest of the great body of the people: To discover this interest will be the result of your deliberations; to pursue it, the result of your doings.

Upon the habits, the opinions, the principles of the people both civil and religious, republican governments solely depend: When the people are habituated to respect the laws and their magistrates, and, aided by the impulses of religion, are attached by political principles to their government, its administration will prosper, and the people be happy. But when they are habituated to view their government as prodigal and oppressive, to be ever jealous of the character and conduct of their magistrates, and from bad principles are induced to vilify and obstruct its public acts, and meet no restraint from religious or moral considerations, the government hastens rapidly to ruin. It is then highly important, that the General Assembly, as the political fathers of the people, should endeavor, by all candid means, to direct the public sentiment. To effect this, the Legislature must possess the confidence of the people. This Gentlemen, you will continue to do, by enacting wise and beneficial laws; by providing for pubic expenditures, and enforcing proper economy in governmental expenses; by electing men of abilities, worth and integrity into office; by inculcating sound morals, and recommending a reverence for the great and salutary duties of religion.

The institutions of religious worship, and the establishment of Colleges and Academies in this state, will afford us much assistance. While our youth are trained up in knowledge and virtue, and the people practice in assembling for the purposes of religious instruction and devotion, we may rationally hope that good principles will prevail, and have their happy effects, in all our personal and public proceedings.

The appointment of civil officers is a necessary part of the business which the Constitution assigns to the General Assembly at their annual Session. Unfortunately for our Country, this has become a matter of discord and party contention in some parts of the union. It cannot be necessary, and it cannot be expedient, to make that, which the Constitution contemplates as a very serious and important duty, become a matter of contention or private interest. By avoiding everything which has the appearance of partiality or intolerance, and private interest, and by aiming to appoint those men who are the best fitted and qualified to discharge the public offices and services, we preserve to ourselves the approbation of our own minds, and give to our fellow Citizens complete evidence, that the principles of Republicanism are not the principles of contention, of intolerance, of individual interest, or of factions, but hose of condor, of public utility and national prosperity.

In the transaction and management of public business, in general, a spirit of candor, temperance and prudence is an essential requisite. No affairs of importance can ever be done to advantage when the mind is agitated with intemperate passions, or inflamed by party purposes and pursuits. In a state, heretofore superior to such influences, it may be presumed that they will not be permitted now to prevail: But that Wisdom, discretion and benevolence, will mark all the proceedings of the present Session.

It is with much satisfaction I announce to you the prosperous state of our finances. The public debt, due on hard money orders, has been discharged; a small annual tax will, in future, be fully adequate to meet the expences of government. I cannot omit recommending to your particular attention, the state of our Militia. That brave and useful part of our fellow Citizens, upon whom the sure and immediate defense of our country depends, are greatly deficient in military equipments — the greater part are destitute of arms — the law on the subject, has lain dormant, and six years' experience has evidenced its inutility; the soldier has found it difficult, if not impracticable, to comply with it, and the officers, sensible of this, have omitted to enforce it. Whether it

would be proper to purchase arms for their use, or by encouraging the manufacture of arms in this State, and thereby affording the Militia an opportunity of equipping themselves, is worthy of your serious consideration. Field Artillery is of indispensable use in modern tactics, and in almost all our sister States provided at the expense of government. Two field pieces to each brigade would not be expensive and burthensome in our present state of prosperity. A tax of such a beneficial intent would be cheerfully submitted to by all classes of people; they would feel a virtuous Pride in cherishing that military zeal which has hitherto animated the militia of this State. Surely the public treasure cannot be better expended than for national defense. Assuredly, the brave, hardy militia of the State of Vermont have merited the patronage of their country as highly as any soldiery in the Union.

A letter from the Governor of the State of Maryland, covering certain resolutions of that State, as well as some other subjects of less import, will be communicated by a special message.

It is not barely to the limits of this State that our political duties are confined; they extend much farther, and have relation to the whole of the federal union. Happy in our own State, by enjoying a republican form of government, it is another and important part of our political trust, that we are connected with the other free states of America by a Federal constitution mutually guaranteeing to each other, and to the whole, protection and defense. Our duty to the Federal government does not depend on names, persons, or political distinctions; least of all does it depend on having the other states uniting with us in the election of any particular person to be President of the United States. Whoever holds that important office, by constitutional appointment and authority, is justly entitled to all the respect and obedience which the Constitution and the laws have attached to the office; and that which in the Federal system is to be revered and obeyed, is not any particular name or opinion, but national and constitutional authority. There cannot, therefore, be a doubt, but that it is our duty to support and preserve the constitution and government of the United States.

As the increase of population is one of the acknowledged criterions of the prosperity of a people, I cannot refrain from congratulating you upon the rapid increase of our Citizens since the last census. This will probably call for a new apportionment of the Representatives from this State to the Congress of the United States; and at the next annual Session of this Assembly, it may be necessary to district the State anew for the election of a requisite number of Representatives. At the present Session, it may be expedient to repeal the act directing the election of members to Congress to be holden in the month of September next, and to adopt such measures, as shall render an extraordinary session of the legislature for this purpose unnecessary.

I shall be ready to concur with you, Gentlemen, in any measure of public utility, and humbly rely upon a superintending Providence, that all our honest endeavors for the public good may be crowned with success.

ISAAC TICHENOR.