

Executive Speech
of
Isaac Tichenor
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*Speech of Gov. Tichenor – 1805*¹.

Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, — It gives me great satisfaction to meet the Representatives of the People, and concur with them in fulfilling the legislative duties, and discharging the important trusts, which our Constituents have assigned to us; and the satisfaction is not a little heightened, by contemplating on the general happiness and prosperity of our Nation and Government. While the fairest part of Europe continues to be the scene of “dreadful preparation” for war, and is menaced, on all sides, with those miseries which flow from that greatest of all human calamities; we are pursuing with peaceful industry, those objects, which constitute the strength, security and glory of a wise and free people. Agriculture flourishes, and a genial soil and climate reward with abundance the labors of that useful and respectable class of our fellow Citizens, the Farmer and the Husbandman. The increase of Commerce enhances the value of productive labor, and the produce of the land. Manufactures daily improve; and the United States presents to the world, a fair specimen of the fruits of a mild and free Government.

It cannot but add to our joy, that the measures adopted by our General Government, for chastising the insolence and repelling the injustice, of the Infidels of one of the Barbary States, have been attended with success. By the blessing of Divine Providence, on the good conduct of our forces in the Mediterranean, seconded by the enterprise, talents and heroism of GENERAL EATON,² our Citizens have been released from Captivity; Tripoli is humbled, and those barbarians, who have extorted an unwilling tribute from the most potent Monarchs in Europe, taught that America is no less irresistible in arms than just and conciliatory in peace.

The business that will engage your attention, the present session, relates principally to the internal affairs of this State; the election of the civil officers of Government; the necessary alteration of existing Laws and ordinances; the encouragement of schools and other seminaries of learning; the improvement of our Militia establishment, and whatever can promote the interest of agriculture, manufactures, public and private tranquility and happiness.

The selection of those Officers, on whose judgment, virtue and impartiality, all that has relation to life, liberty and property may depend, is a weighty and serious transaction. Instead of being a matter of intrigue, party, or selfish policy, it ought to be conducted with all the calmness of wisdom, and disinterestedness of virtue. You will, I have no doubt, meet this part of your duty with a fixed purpose of regarding only the public good, and promoting the honor and welfare of the State.

Of the laws, now in force, that may require amendment, I particularly invite your attention to that, which authorizes the Supreme Court to grant *Bills of Divorce*. One of the necessary qualities and conditions that constitute a good law, is, that it be adequate to its end, and shall prevent the evil against which it is directed. As the existing Law on the subject of Divorce, dissolves the bonds of matrimony on the real or implied criminality of either party, it is justly to be apprehended, indeed experience hath proved the fact, that it includes a temptation to commit the offence, for the sake of separation. Marriage being, of all human institutions, that in which Society is most interested, I have no doubt, the Legislature will give it an attention, commensurate with its moral and political consequences; and duly consider, that as families are the elementary forms of society, their distinct connection ought not to be dissolved on slight grounds, nor the dissolute furnished with an opportunity to free himself from restraint by the commission of a crime.

The business particularly instructed to me, by the Legislature at their last session, relative to the boundary line, between this State and the Province of Canada, has been strictly attended to; and will be the subject of a future message.

I have the honor to lay before you, certain Resolutions of the Legislatures of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Massachusetts, transmitted by their respective Governors, to receive your concurrence and

¹ Ms. *Council Journal*, Vol. 5, p.150

² As Gen. Eaton had resided in Vermont, served as Clerk of the General Assembly, and commanded the first company enlisted in this State for service in the United States army, his brilliant campaign here alluded to was peculiarly pleasing to Vermonters.

adoption. The Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed by the states of Kentucky and Pennsylvania, which has for its object, the abridgement of the judiciary power of the Courts of the United States, and to confine their jurisdiction to certain cases, therein mentioned, will necessarily attract your most serious and careful consideration. Whatever may have a tendency to weaken any part of the conventional obligation of the confederate States, or to diminish that expectation of an impartial administration of Justice, which maintains an unsuspecting intercourse, between the Citizens of the different States, and on which mutual confidence and credit are founded; whatever can open a door for the admission of jealousy and distrust, will, certainly, not be adopted by you, without the most urgent and indispensable necessity.

The amendment proposed by North Carolina and adopted by Massachusetts, for putting a stop to the importation of Slaves into the United States, will, likewise, call for your legislative decision. It cannot, I flatter myself, be necessary that I should impress on your minds, that the *Genius of universal Emancipation* ought to be cherished by Americans; that there is no complexion incompatible with Freedom; and that we owe to the Character of our Country, in the abstract, and the laws of humanity, our best endeavors, to repress that impious and immoral traffic.

It cannot too often be repeated that union and moderation are the principal constituents of national felicity and happiness. Altho' you may have left in your respective towns many individuals, heated with political zeal, and in the eagerness of emulation, contending merely for pre-eminence, I trust this deliberative body will be influenced by a candid, tolerant spirit, which will justly command the attention of the wise and good, and the approbation of your Constituents.

In every attempt of this kind, I shall be happy to co-operate with you, and as far as in me lies, render that assistance which the Constitution has made part of my official duty.

ISAAC TICHENOR.