

Executive Speech
of
Isaac Tichenor
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*Speech of Gov. Tichenor – 1806*¹.

Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, – As the science of forming and administering a good government furnishes the means of procuring to mankind the greatest possible degree of happiness, I confidently hope we shall enter on the performance of the great and solemn duties, assigned to us by our Constituents, with corresponding sentiments of candor and solicitude. And, as a Republican Government is, for an enlightened and virtuous community, the best which human wisdom has yet devised, it necessarily follows, that its ministers and legislators should consider themselves as the Guardians and Trustees of the People, to promote whose happiness they should, on all occasions, exercise their most mature judgment and unbiased opinion.² It is a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which we are highly responsible.

A due regard to considerations of this nature, will secure us against the influence of faction, the rage of party, and the undue exercise of the power committed to our charge. As Freedom lies between the extremes of anarchy and despotism, it has, in every country, been impelled in the one or the other direction, by the prejudices and passions of the inconsiderate and ignorant or the cupidity of the base and unprincipled. If we calmly and impartially recur to the struggles, which have been made in the old world, to introduce and maintain free governments, and the successive changes through which they have passed, owing to the perpetual conflicts between wisdom and folly, between patriotism and unwarrantable ambition, we shall resolve them all into the lust of power, and a disposition “studious of change and pleased with novelty.” From all these, we may derive lessons of practical instruction; and realize the truth of that important political maxim, that “no free government can continue long to exist, unless the utmost harmony and most conciliatory spirit pervades its council.” Rivalship for power produces an abandonment of principle, and ought to be guarded against, by the Representative of a Free People, as the cause of every species of mischief and misery.

In our local relations, no part of the Globe seems to be better fitted for the establishment and preservation of rational liberty, than that in which a kind Providence has placed us. Blessed with a fruitful soil, which rewards with abundance the industry of the husbandman; and engaged in commerce, only so far as it furnishes the conveniences and elegancies of life, and increases the value of our productive labor, we may live independent of the national policy of Europe, and successfully cultivate the arts of peace and domestic happiness.

To adopt measures the least burdensome and invidious for the support of government; to provide for an adequate and impartial administration of Justice; the support of Schools and Colleges; the defense of the State, by a well organized and well armed Militia; to promote the interests of religion and morality, and secure to industry its lawful acquisitions, comprise your principal duties.

While the path of duty is thus plain, and the Public Good the great object to which, as virtuous Citizens and enlightened Statesmen, you will refer all your actions; I may reasonably draw the pleasing conclusion, that the civil officers for the ensuing year will be appointed without any regard to the wishes or jealousies of men who seek only their own advancement; or the combinations of individuals, which are the prolific sources of much mischief and general discontent.³ In the most improved state of society, there will always exist a diversity of opinion on speculative subjects; and every good government will adopt such general regulations as will ensure,⁴ as far as possible, individuals of every shade of opinion against even the fear of injustice or oppression. It is, therefore, highly just and expedient that the civil offices of the State should be filled with men eminent for wisdom, virtue and impartiality.

I have the satisfaction to announce, that the measures taken by the Legislature, at their last session, to ascertain the Northern boundary of this State, promise a very valuable acquisition. Conformably with the power vested in me, by the act for that purpose, I appointed D^r. [Samuel] Williams to ascertain the true divisional line between this State and the Province of lower Canada; which by a course of Astronomical observations, made

¹ Ms. *Council Journal*, Vol. 5, p. 228.

² In the printed speech it is “mature judgment, founded on an unbiassed opinion.”

³ Possibly Gov. Tichenor had in mind the caucus system, which had been introduced into Vermont in 1804.

⁴ “Secure” in the printed speech.

near the ancient monument at Connecticut River he found to be nearly fourteen miles South of the latitude of Forty five degrees. At the Lake Memphremagog the present divisional line was found to be more than seven Miles South of what it ought to be. From these observations, the result is, that the State has been out of possession, owing to the error in establishing the divisional line, of a tract of land equal to Eighteen Townships. The acknowledged experience and profound science of the person employed for that purpose warrants the belief, that his observations and calculations are without material error. The report which has been made to me, on this subject, together with the map that accompanied it, shall be laid before you. So large a tract of land, which on the settlement of the line would probably fall within the Jurisdiction of this State, appears to me to be an object worthy of your attention. The object can only be effected by an application to the Executive of our national Government.

I shall cheerfully and cordially concur in the adoption of every measure, which the wisdom of the Legislature may suggest, for advancing the happiness of the people, and the dignity and Character of the State.

ISAAC TICHENOR.