

Executive Speech
of
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SPEECH OF GOV. GALUSHA— 1816¹.

Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, – We have, through the interposition of an indulgent Providence, the pleasure to meet under the most agreeable circumstances, at this annual session of the General Assembly, to transact the ordinary business of legislation, and deliberate on the most prudent means to secure and advance the prosperity and happiness of our constituents. Our country is at peace with all nations, as also with our savage neighbors; and no appearances of hostility, or internal disturbances, threaten our repose. Let us, therefore, with hearts of gratitude for past and present favors, still look to Him who holds the destinies of all men in his hands, for future blessings, and for wisdom to guide us in all our transactions.

A time of peace is a fit time to correct our errors, to cement our union, to make the necessary reform in our laws, and to recur to, and cherish the fundamental principles of our government. The fall of all former republics, or their existing in name only, ought to be a sufficient caution to us to be watchful of our rights, and guard against every innovation dangerous to liberty.

It is a correct maxim, that virtue is the basis of a republican government; and where vice predominates, tyranny, in some shape, ensues. Virtue, therefore, ought to be the pole star to guide us in all our deliberations; and the whole system of law should be adapted to promote that vital principle. I entertain the highest confidence in you, gentlemen, that in all the appointments of officers, of which you are the electors, you will have regard to men of integrity and virtue as well as of information and talents. Did we possess the best possible system of human laws, yet, should they be disregarded, and remain unenforced by the civil magistrate, it would avail us nothing; vice would soon tyrannize over moral virtue, and destroy the best of human governments.

Education is among the first objects of a free people; for a people who lose the knowledge of their rights will not long enjoy the fruits of liberty. A republican government is a government of the people; and the virtue and intelligence of the people are its security and its strength. It is, therefore, highly necessary that the great body of the people should be well informed, and that each individual should attain to such a degree of literature, as to be able, with proper attention, to secure his property, understand and guard his rights, and, if called to fill a public station, or practice in any professional business, with due attention to his particular calling, to discharge his duty with advantage to himself, and satisfaction to the public, in order that genius and talents be not smothered in ignorance, and their brightness and utility obscured by poverty. Notwithstanding a Franklin, and other, through indefatigable industry, and the peculiar favor of Providence, have risen from obscurity to eminence, yet, who can say how many men of vigorous talents, and natural capacities, have struggled in vain, and, leaving no testimony of usefulness, their names have passed into oblivion.

The great improvement in the education of youth in this state within a few years past, is truly gratifying. In our common schools, we experience the benefit of instructors from the colleges and academies, by which means numbers of good English scholars are daily emerging from our town schools.

If any further aid to science should be deemed necessary, I doubt not that it will receive all the encouragement that the present circumstances of the state will admit.

Encomiums on the government of our country, at this time are unnecessary, since its benefits are so generally experienced and acknowledged by every prudent and virtuous citizen, and its strength and liberality, so recently tested. The constant emigration to this country from under the governments of Europe, is an evidence that we possess privileges and blessings, superior to the other nations of the earth. It, therefore, becomes us to pursue such measures as will tend to strengthen our union increase harmony and friendship, and perpetuate the blessings of our free, liberal, and happy government.

The cheerfulness with which the citizens of this State have paid their taxes, laid by the general government, in consequence of the expenses of the late war, which has so gloriously terminated in the exaltation of our

¹ From printed *Assembly Journal* of 1816, p. 15.

national character, is a source of peculiar satisfaction. The diminution of taxes at the last session of Congress, and the present prospect of the continuance of peace, give us strong reason to hope that the direct tax will wholly cease after the present year; an object very desirable, considering the extreme scarcity of a circulating medium in this part of the union – but this we must submit to the sound discretion of the national government, while we manage with suitable economy the pecuniary affairs of our own State.

The depressed situation of our infant manufactories, since the return of peace, is a matter of serious concern. Any encouragement that can, consistently be given them, I trust, will not be withheld.

In compliance with a resolution of the General Assembly, passed at their last session, I lost no time in preparing, and sending, by Major Seth Cushman, who was appointed an agent for that purpose, an address to His Excellency Sir Gordon Drummond, then governor of the Province of Lower Canada, requesting the pardon and release of Samuel Hugh, a citizen of this State, who was then suffering punishment in one of the prisons in said Province, under a sentence of the hon. court of King's Bench, for the crime of man-slaughter; and I have the pleasure to inform you that his excellency, in a prompt and honorable manner, granted a pardon to the said Samuel Hugh, and caused him to be immediately released from his confinement, and restored to his family and friends.²

It becomes necessary for the legislature to make provision for, and direct in what manner, electors shall be chosen, on the part of this state to vote for a President and Vice President of the United States, to serve for the term of four years from and after the third day of March next.

By a law of the United States, approved April 20th, 1816, entitled “an act concerning field officers of the militia,” it is provided, that from and after the first day of May then next, instead of one lieutenant colonel commandant to each regiment, and one major to each battalion, there shall be one colonel, one lieutenant colonel, and one major to each regiment of militia, consisting of two battalions; and when there shall be but one battalion it shall be commanded by a major. It, therefore, becomes necessary to pass a law of this state correspondent to the law of the United State, and that the field officers of the militia be commissioned accordingly. Any further improvement that you may deem expedient in the militia system, will meet with my warmest support; as I have ever considered a well disciplined and well furnished militia an object of the first importance in a free government.

I avail myself of this opportunity to inform you, that I have received a deed, executed by the Treasure of this State, in compliance with an act of the legislature, to Capt. Thomas McDonough, of the navy of the United States, of a tract of land lying at Cumberland Head, in Plattsburgh, State of New York. I have addressed Capt. McDonough on the subject, but have not yet received his answer.

Several communications have been made to me by the executives of our sister States, relative to proposals of amendment to the constitution of the United States.

I have also received a letter from the Hon. DE WITT CLINTON, president of a board of commissioners, appointed by the legislature of the State of New York for the purpose of examining the ground between Lake Champlain and Hudson river, and reporting on the practicability of uniting those important waters by a canal navigation: — an object which, if practicable, would be very interesting to a great portion of the inhabitants of this State.

These communications I shall seasonably submit to your consideration by a special message.

The uncommon failure of some of the most important articles of produce, on which the sustenance of man and beast depends, is so alarming, that I take the liberty to recommend to you, and through you, to the people of

² Huger was a citizen of Canaan, who, in 1815, on a charge of murdering David Morrill, a citizen of Canada, had been found guilty of man-slaughter, and sentenced to be branded in the hand and to suffer imprisonment for six months. It is apparent that he must have suffered the sentence to a large degree. A committee of the General Assembly of 1815 reported that Hugh had been “wrongfully and unjustly convicted,” and consequently lost most of his personal property, where upon an act was passed granting Mrs. Hugh \$10000, and a resolution adopted asking for a pardon to Hugh. – See printed Assembly Journal of 1815, pp. 110, 142: and Laws of 1815, p. 24.

this State, the most rigid economy in the early expenditure of those articles of provision most deficient, that by peculiar precaution we may avoid, as far as possible, the foreboded evil of this unparalleled season.³

On your wisdom and integrity, gentlemen, I shall firmly rely, for the judicious management of those weighty concerns, in which the interest of our constituents is deeply involved. Collected from the several towns throughout this State, you bring with you all the information necessary to legislate for the free and enlightened people you represent. Suffer me to solicit your kind support, while I cheerfully engage, on my part to cooperate with you in all your endeavors to promote the best good of this state, and the general happiness of mankind. And may our join efforts be attended with success.

JONAS GALUSHA

³ For a brief account of this remarkable season, see *Thompson's Vermont*, Part I, p. 20.