

Executive Speech  
of  
Jonas Galusha  
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SPEECH OF GOV. GALUSHA— 1817<sup>1</sup>.

*Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives,* – Permit me, on this occasion, with gratitude, to express the satisfaction I feel that the freemen of this State have so far approved my past conduct, as again to honor me with their confidence.

It is a source of peculiar gratification that we are convened under circumstances the most propitious. That universal gloom with fearful apprehensions of extreme want spread over the mind at the close of the last season, and the commencement of the present, has by the extraordinary frugality of the people, succeeded by the blessing of heaven, been happily dispelled, and the dreadful distress but lightly felt. We have abundant cause of gratitude to the Author of all our benefits for the luxuriant harvest of the present year, the unusual degree of health which has prevailed throughout this State, the general harmony existing among us, and above all, for the right and recent spiritual harvest which, in many places, has been truly great.<sup>2</sup>

The deficiency of a circulating medium, owing to an increased emigration of our inhabitants to the west, who have converted their property into cash for transportation, and the unfruitfulness of past seasons, in addition to the common causes which uniformly produce a scarcity of money at the close of a war, has caused some serious embarrassments; but the industry and economy it has excited has nearly counterbalanced the evils experienced. By the pursuance of this prudent course, if attended with the ordinary smiles of Providence, we shall soon possess a suitable portion of circulating medium, without resorting to the ruinous system of paper credit. The act of last session making it penal to pass any bill or note of a less sum than one dollar, in lieu of money, has had its desired effect in preventing further impositions, without introducing any material evil.

No important political changes among foreign powers, affecting the interest of this, or the United States, have come to my knowledge since our last session. The nations of Europe remain settled on their lees. Happy would it have been had their contests terminated for favorably to the rights and liberties of the people. But notwithstanding some symptoms which excite fond, yet feeble expectations of amelioration of the condition of that long devoted country, multitudes of her inhabitants, awakened to a sense of their sufferings, and aspiring for liberty, are resorting to the United States, the only present asylum for oppressed and afflicted humanity. These emigrants, with many of our own citizens, are rapidly settling and cultivating the western wilds, where they will soon form a strong barrier against savage barbarities, and foreign encroachments.

The inhabitants of the southern part of this continent are still struggling for freedom and independence, the issue of which must decide the happiness or misery of millions of the present and succeeding generations. It will essentially affect not only our commercial states, but the world at large. Should emancipation be the event, we may rationally hope, ere long, to see arts and science, agriculture, commerce and manufactures flourishing throughout that vast, populous and fertile region, and every rank of its habitants in the full fruition of all the blessings of civil and religious liberty, unshackled by superstition, uncircumscribed by the edicts of kings. While we anticipate the prosperity of others, let us critically attend to all the probably means of heightening our own.<sup>3</sup>

Improvement in manufacturing is a subject so closely connected with the interest of this State, that it cannot fail of engaging your attention. It should be the policy of a State so remote from the great marts of the world, and not adjacent to the sea-board, to adopt every prudent measure to supply her wants by her own manufacture; by which means she prevents the emigration of many of her valuable citizens to other parts of the country to find employment, makes a neat saving of the expense of transporting that portion of provision consumed by the manufacturers, and turns the balance of exports and imports in her own favor. Little need be said to recommend an object of such apparent importance.

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<sup>1</sup> From printed *Assembly Journal* of 1817, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> This is the first, and probably the only instance in which a governor of Vermont has alluded to revivals of religion in the annual message.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the revolution in a part of the South American provinces under Simon Bolivar y Ponte, who in 1821 became President of the Republic of Columbia, and later of Bolivia and Peru.

I would suggest for your consideration, the propriety of an early and thorough examination of the affairs of the State prison, to ascertain whether any improvement can be made in the employment of the convicts, or better economy introduced relative to the expense of their subsistence.

If the state of our finances will admit, I am of the opinion, that to purchase a stock of materials, prepare the proper machinery, and employ a part of the prisoners in manufacturing woolen cloth, would be a more profitable than to employ so large a portion of the laborers in weaving cotton, especially while the depressed state of factories renders that business so disadvantageous. From the present value of woolen cloth, compared with the price of the raw materials, it is evident that a handsome saving might be made to the State by the manufacture of that article. I would also recommend the purchasing of a small tract of pasture land in the vicinity of the prison, for the purpose of keeping cows, which would be a means of furnishing the prisoners with a cheap and wholesome diet during the warm seasons of the year.

It will be found necessary, even if the present system of labor be continued, to erect additional workshops, unless some other mode of punishment, for crimes of small magnitude, should be deemed preferable to confinement in the state prison.

An elegant map of the state of New Hampshire has been, by that government, presented to the state of Vermont, which, with the laws of several of the sister states, I have caused to be transported to this place to be deposited as the general assembly shall direct.

Sundry communications, from different departments of the general government, and from individual states, have been made to me during the last year. All those designed for your consideration will be seasonably submitted.

Permit me, gentlemen, before I close, to express the entire confidence I feel, not only in your intelligence and ability, but also in the purity of your intentions, to manage concerns of your constituents in such a manner as shall tend to ensure their equal rights and promote their highest happiness. The importance of our trust will be realized when we compare our distinguished privileges with those of the people of any other country.

We find ourselves, after the most arduous and threatening conflicts, by the interposition of divine goodness, at peace with all nations, tranquil and happy among ourselves, and in the full participation of every right, whether moral, civil or religious.

It is the imperious duty of the legislature, as the faithful guardians of those sacred rights, under every circumstance, to watch over them with peculiar care, cherish every principle, and employ every means that tends to support and perpetuate them; among which may be ranked general information, industry, frugality, science, morality and pure religion. While these prevail, we may safely rely on the continuance of all the blessings of our free and equitable government.

Under these considerations, our attention will naturally be drawn to the promotion of education, in all its various branches, as the most powerful barrier against those errors of sentiment and practice, which corrupt, misguide, and enslave a people.

My best endeavors will be used to carry into effect such measures as you in your wisdom shall adopt. And may sagacity, prudence, unanimity and firmness characterize the proceedings of our present session.

JONAS GALUSHA