

Executive Speech
of
Jonas Galusha
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SPEECH OF GOV. GALUSHA— 1818¹.

Gentlemen of the Council, and Gentlemen of the General Assembly, – Having been called by the suffrages of a free people, and permitted by divine providence to assemble agreeable to the provisions of the constitution, to attend to the civil concerns of the state, it behooves us at all times, but more especially when acting under so important a trust, to look up to Him who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and is the disposer of events, for direction and support in attending to all the duties that devolve on us as guardians of the rights and privileges of the people.

It is with peculiar pleasure I congratulate you on the present prosperity of the State and nation. Peace, health, and plenty are among the peculiar blessings with which we are favored; while an apparent increase of morality, benevolence and piety, presage still happier times.

The recent dangers we have passed will be a sufficient monitor to keep alive in your hearts a sense of the necessity of union, and that watchful care and perseverance which are indispensable to the preservation of the rights and privileges of a free people. It would be folly in us to imagine that the only dangers, to which a free people are exposed, exist in times of the most ardent struggles, when assailed by powerful foreign foes. This we have experienced and surmounted; but political experience demonstrates that the more fatal foe lurks in the heart of man; that secret ambition to aggrandize himself and promote his own private ends, chills his generous ardour for the concerns of his country; and his desire for the prosperity of his fellow citizens is too apt to lie dormant or smothered in his bosom; but I am unwilling to believe that the vital spark of patriotism and republican virtue is extinguished in the hearts of Americans. I appeal to you, Gentlemen, who are well versed in ancient and modern history, whether the fall of republics have not oftener happened in consequence of a slow decline of republican virtues and simplicity, and from internal divisions, than from any combination of kings and monarchs to overthrow them. In times of the greatest apparent security, the seeds of dissolution are often sown, and imperceptibly grow, until the roots become too strong to be eradicated.

The remarks, Gentlemen are not made with a view to any political party, or particular individuals, or to discourage any laudable enterprise, but to check that aspiring ambition to which the human heart is exposed, and to prevent, in times of apparent safety, our lapsing into a state of inattention to our political concerns, through a natural propensity to ease, which sometimes proves dangerous. A people negligent of their rights will not long retain their liberties.

It behooves you, Gentlemen, not only to watch over the exigencies arising within this State, but carefully to guard against any encroachments on the sovereignties of the individual States, or infringements on the privileges reserved to them, or to the people.

A prudent legislature will critically examine every new subject that may be presented for their consideration, compare it with the first principles of our government, and trace it to its most probably effect in its fullest operation, in order to decide on its merits.

In acting on all private bills and petitions, a due regard to justice ought never to be dispensed with; and favors ought only to be granted when they do not interfere with the public good, or that interest and happiness of other individuals. In passing laws which are to have a partial operation, it will be well to keep in view that excellent maxim contained in our bill of rights, that “government is or ought to be instated for the common benefit, protection and security of the people, nation, or community, and not for the particular emolument or advantage of any single man, family, or set of men, who are a part only of that community.”

It would be trespassing on your time, if not on your patience, to attempt to call your attention to the several matters that will naturally fall under your consideration. The attention of former legislatures has been frequently occupied on the subject of education. A subject so interesting to the rising generation, and so necessary to the happiness, safety, and honor of the State, cannot easily escape the notice of this or any future

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Legislature. The subject of manufacturing, and the regulation of the militia, are matters usually submitted to standing committees, therefore particular remarks on those subjects will be unnecessary.

Many useful improvements have been made in the State, while no considerable attempts have been made to improve our state of agriculture. Although we ought to rely as much as possible on home manufactures for a supply of manufactured articles, yet it must be acknowledged that the main source of our wealth and subsistence of every class of citizens, must depend on the cultivating of the soil. When our farms were new and unimpaired by tillage, it was profitable to extend our labours and cast our seed over a large portion of our soil, but as our lands become less productive by the frequency of crops, it is necessary that new modes of husbandry should be resorted to, in order to keep them in a fertile state, and that the different qualities of the soil be improved to the best advantage for tillage or grazing – which in all probability will require more labor and expense in cultivating an equal quantity of land, and of course prevent the too frequent emigration of the laboring class of our citizens. I do not expect that the state of our finances is such as to admit of expenditures on the subject; yet it is possible that something may be done that would prove useful, by authorizing patriotic and enterprising individuals to form into societies, with corporate privileges, for the beneficial purposes of advancing agricultural interests, encouraging manufactures, and improving our breed of domestic animals, within the several counties where it is deemed necessary. I am apprised that an agricultural society was incorporated in the year 1806, but this society being extended over the whole State, the members being so remote from each other, and the field for examinations so extensive that it proved ineffectual, and now exists only in name. I am, however, of opinion, that societies formed within proper limits may, by experiments, proper researches, and correspondence with each other, prove highly beneficial; for, notwithstanding the spirit of industry and laudable enterprise that appears among our citizens, yet much remains to be done for the benefit of individuals, and the State, by a wise direction of their labors and expenditures, to the most profitable objects, and in the most useful and economical manner; but a treatise on the subject would, on the present occasion, be improper; a hint only is my design.

In selecting the officers to be appointed by the General Assembly, your own prudence will lead you to seek for men of integrity, and uprightness of conduct, as well as of competent capacity, to discharge the various duties attached to the several offices for which they are to be elected. It will be necessary at this session to elect a Senator from this State to the Senate of the United States, to serve for the term of six years from and after the third day of March next; and also to fill the vacancy in that body occasioned by the resignation of the Hon. James Fisk.

Sundry communications have been made to me since the last session of the General Assembly, for your consideration; all which shall be seasonably submitted.

Your own interest, and that of your constituents, will engage your speedy and faithful attention to the business of the session, and bring the same to a close as early as the nature and extent of the matters you may have under your consideration will admit. My best endeavors to second every measure you may adopt, to promote the public weal, will not be wanting; and it is my anxious desire, that a spirit of harmony and candor may prevail with us, and that the result of our doings may terminate in the best interests of the state, and meet the approbation of our constituents.

JONAS GALUSHA