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FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

CONSIDERATIONS

On the Government of the TERRITORY of COLUMBIA.

No. IV.

HAVING in the preceding numbers furnished a plan both for the general and local government of the Territory, it will remain in this number to add a few considerations addressed to the inhabitants of the Territory, to satisfy their minds that this government either is, or would certainly be the result of operations become adequate to the management of all its concerns.

The mind must be callous to the propriety of the Territory, that does not spontaneously allow the necessity of a total separation of it from the respective States from which it was taken. A volume might be written to demonstrate the truth of this assertion in every point that it embraces; but it is considered that a single ray of patriotic ardor for its interest will bring conviction to every heart, and that those who do not feel its truth are actuated by other considerations than a desire to promote the wealth, honor and advantage, which might in the natural course of human affairs attend the metropolis of a great country as the United States.

What man attached to freedom will say that the people of this Territory ought to be led in the general mass; and to be without any participation in the Federal Government? What considerate mind will deny that it is better for this purpose that it should be placed constitutionally on the footing that has been proposed; than that the favor should be divided partially, and in such a way as not to be felt by two individual States?

Where is the man who can believe that its local interests can better be confided to those States; than to all the States as large, and to its own inhabitants? It is becoming necessary that no further representations need to be made on these two heads. I shall confine myself principally in this number to one subject which has occurred to every mind; and respecting which an opinion from what erroneous sources has not been obvious to every person, on first view of the subject, that a police is necessary in the city of Washington, in Alexandria, and in George Town. All cities and large towns require a police, and without it none can flourish, or afford an elegant and commodious residence.

But it has been generally imagined that a Senate and corporate body of magistrates is necessary for each of these places. In framing this opinion no regard has been paid to the country out of their limits. Perhaps there has been a desire to abandon this to the States as of value; perhaps it was thought of no consequence to leave this in anarchy.

I trust that I have used arguments sufficient to produce conviction on every unprejudiced mind, that it is contrary to the spirit of the constitution, to the letter of it, and to the best interests of the Territory, to leave a single inch of it in the possession of the States; but that the Federal Government should have the sovereign executive jurisdiction.

The idea of corporations has occurred from a comparison of these places with others of a similar kind, as Philadelphia or Baltimore; and were the situation of the towns in the Territory in the least similar to those, the idea would be natural and proper enough.

But it must be remembered that the towns in the Territory are leagued in common interests; which is not the case in other places where there is a discontinuity, and that the country is a partaker of this interest. Hence for the regulation of local matters in the Territory there is required a general superintending authority, which in some measure, as concerns distant towns in the same State, as Philadelphia and Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania; and

inapolis and Baltimore in Maryland. Without this, the resources and exertions of the whole Territory never can be drawn forth and applied to any one object; but its several parts, always in collision, and drawing two different ways, must occasion a sacrifice of all general to particular interests.

I trust that experience will demonstrate that a numerous and respectable legislature for the whole Territory will entirely supersede the necessity of separate deliberative bodies, and that it will be found in its application the most equitable, impartial, and effective depository of authority, and the least expensive.

If the Territory is divided, in its present or to come, into five precincts, such as are designated in an appendix to number 2, with a Sheriff and Aldermen or Justices in each, invested with full executive and judicial powers as the legislature may from time to time prescribe, will not every object, under the superintending care of the legislature, be attained with ease, effect and economy?

In order to be perfectly satisfied let us draw before this can be done it is necessary to draw a line between full disbursements and expenditures as may properly be expected from the federal Government; and such as are properly chargeable on the inhabitants themselves.

The committee who reported the bill have not adverted to this subject. They have cut the Gordian knot of all difficulties by saying they are not willing to investigate any thing. It is the only remedy the affairs of this Metropolis will fall into order by the mere diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth, without the aid of human interposition; or that its inhabitants, like a flock of sheep, can be governed by some physical instinct, without the precarious aid of reason? Or do they intend that the resources of the Federal Government shall be lavished for the wants of this favorite child, the door of its Treasury kept open, and its every wish gratified or repaid.

If this latter should be intended, whatever declamations we may owe for false benevolence, I trust that the inhabitants of the Territory will have good reason to perceive that, it is the most intolerable and most oppressive of all that is asked in appeal to the poverty and indigence, and the zeal of its fervor.

This territory is polluted as proportion of resources as adequate in preference to its own exigencies as any other part of the United States; and as it is not affected by a distracted inefficient government it will soon be more so. Every inhabitant ought to pride himself in this pecuniary independence; and to discourage a contingent application to Congress for donations and charities, which cannot fall in the end to make every State in the Union our enemy.

Yet there are certain expenditures proper to be expected from the Federal Government. The erection and keeping in repair of the Presidential, the Capitol, and the buildings which will be necessary for the judiciary of the United States; the fortifications, the public yards, and a naval hospital; the construction of the great canal; the improvement of the public gardens; the erection and preservation of honorary memorials for their distinguished warriors, the maintenance of their monuments; the maintenance of a national academy; these and a variety of similar calls, which may be imagined with more ease than they can be enumerated, are entirely its advantages, or to greater its utility, and this territory alone ought not to be oppressed with the burden.

But as many other objects again are for our use, our convenience, to promote our advantages, or to gratify our pride. The paving and lighting of streets, the regulation of buildings and wharves, the institution of hospitals and lazarettos, the regulation of hackney coaches, the maintenance of bridges and ferries, the regulation of prisons and penitentiaries, these and a great variety of objects, which cannot now be the infancy of our metropolis, and indeed

of our nation, be foreseen or imagined, but which will come with preling urgency long before it shall have obtained the age of London or Paris, will continue a series of all our unremitted attention, management, and economy. Some of them in fact are the wants of posterity; and not of the present age. But we must consider, and that consideration must be attended with pain and displeasure, that we are legislating for posterity as well as for ourselves; and that the interest of millions unborn is confided to our hands. It is all important in all affairs to begin right, to take a comprehensive circumflective view, to build the mound, to lay out the channel, before the great tide rolls in, unexpected and unmanageable.

For the attainment of any such object, let us examine the course in which we are proceeding under the arrangement which has been proposed.

An object of expense is either for the benefit of the whole territory, and therefore properly chargeable on all its inhabitants; or it is for the particular benefit of a part, and therefore properly chargeable on such part. What tribunal is more proper to draw the line between these distinctions than the legislature of the whole? What authority is more competent to apply the burden where it ought to be felt, with justice, equity, impartiality and effect, than the legislature of the whole? How easy is it for it in the collection of its taxes to add the wants of the whole territory, to add a special allotment for the wants of some particular part? If some object is to be undertaken, how easy is it to appoint a commissioner with exclusive powers only, retaining all the deliberative in the legislature? If a general and permanent aid to the powers of the executive government should be found necessary, how easy is it to add a majority of exclusive powers only? In short every step we advance renders the subject to plain, and clear, that further arguments are unnecessary, but unavailing to be used. Before I conclude, I shall add one word on two smaller concerns; which it may not be superfluous to advert to.

The one is the interests of certain political parties; the literary, institutions within the territory, which are not elected by the States; and which may fear a fall in the transition from one government to another.

Their institutions are principally the corporate bodies of Alexandria and Georgetown; the banks of Alexandria and Columbia; the university of St. Mary's; the Library Company of Alexandria.

With respect to the two first it may be observed that all their judicial powers will of course be absorbed in the judicial system of the territory. Their executive powers will probably be revised, under a modification improved, and not deteriorated.

With respect to the Banks of Alexandria and Columbia, a confidence may be entertained, without a shadow of apprehension, that their charters will not be disturbed. They may wish to keep their property by the change. The federal government, and a legislature of their own, may be expected to afford a more liberal and solid security than the State governments.

The Library Company of Alexandria, so far from being allied, will probably have the pleasure of seeing their example followed, and the same attention paid to their concerns as to those of the Territory. All these institutions ought to exhibit only confidence; to betray no selfishness, no jealousy. They ought to embark with the same courage in the common cause, which separate fears, even when they are formed, will reconcile all interests, and establish harmony and reciprocity.

With respect to the University of St. Mary's, it may be proper to say little. An institution of this kind will be followed by every republican government. It would be infinitely in its interest to annihilate, robbery, or speculation. If any alteration takes place respecting it, it cannot fail to be for the best, and not for the worst. The other point to which I allude is in the expense of the government proposed.

In all underings it is proper to begin with moderation and parsimony. The salary of the governor is properly chargeable to the United States. All officers created by the laws of the territory ought to be paid from their proper resources. The expense of the executive and judicial establishment would be so small, so little distant from what in one way or other is now actually attached to it, that when every thing is considered it would not be difficult to find that the quantum of real expenditure is in fact diminished.

The principal expense will attend the legislatures. Here we must be minute. The body is not intended for a school of eloquence; for the popular and florid language. It is an allocation of men of business, whose time is precious to them, and that their constituents are depending on the law, whose members would be so near each other; who would have so frequent opportunities to discuss and confer with their constituents, and with one another, on every important subject, or fifteen days twice in the year, would be sufficient for their sittings, the expense could not be oppressive. They ought to receive for their services as much as will defray the expenses of their absence from their families; but no more.

It is probable that if necessity required it, the first legislature would serve without pay. Admit that it should average one day in the month in the year, this one day twice in the year, would be sufficient for their sittings, the expense could not be oppressive. They ought to receive for their services as much as will defray the expenses of their absence from their families; but no more.

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I have been led to a length which the subject did not promise at first but which I conceive is not greater than the duty of justice. If my sentiments are not adopted, the objection of men can be attended with no disadvantage to the inhabitants of that territory, for, whose feelings they were intended. If a temporary, and incomplete system is preferred, I shall only have to lament the effect of prejudice which in my judgment interest will sustain; but my mind will feel a diminution of one impulse to one exertion, and one bundle and unprofitable pen can contribute to the good of the Territory.

E. AMINONDAS,
City of Washington,
December 23d, 1850.

APPENDIX. No. I.

A Copy of the Bill reported by the committee.

§ 1. A bill concerning the District of Columbia.

§ 2. Section 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled—That the laws of the State of Virginia, as they existed on the first Monday of December in the year 1800 shall be and continue in force in that part of the District of Columbia which was ceded by the said State to the United States, as they existed on the said first Monday in December, shall be and continue in force in that part of the said district which was ceded by that State to the United States, and by them accepted as aforesaid.

§ 3. Section 2. And be it further enacted—That all officers appointed by the laws of Virginia, and who had jurisdiction in or over the said district, or any part thereof, on the said first Monday in December, according to the terms of the constitution and laws of the said State, shall continue to hold and exercise full jurisdiction until removed by the President of the United States, or until they shall be superseded by all such officers having the respective duties in this manner designated by the President