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Statement of the situation of the French Empire—1806 & 1807.

Gentlemen deputies from the departments to the legislative body, the year which has elapsed since the close of your session, will not occupy a less important place in history than the glorious and memorable year that preceded it, and France, accustomed in some measure to admiration as much as to gratitude, will have seen that under such a chief as he who directs her high destinies ; this double sentiment may be renewed every day.

When, fifteen months ago, you separated in order to return to your homes, after having, during the course of your session, fulfilled with as much eagerness as concert, the duties imposed upon you by the confidence of the nation and that of the Sovereign, the emperor appeared to be at length ready to taste the sweetest fruits of his glorious labors ; he saw the time at hand, not of his own repose, but of the repose of France. A new continental war had been terminated in three months ; the inhabitants of Germany were all become either the friends or allies of France ; Prussia was still among this number ; Russia appeared to wish for the end of an enmity, without either aim or object ; by dint of triumphs and moderation, the emperor seemed to have at length acquired to France the right of enjoying in peace all that he had done for her. He was restored to the country ; his people received him with transports of hilarity and love, bringing back new laurels and new blessings ; numerous deputations came from the extremities of the empire to offer him the tribute of the public homage : the army were preparing to come, in order to enjoy in the heart of their country the *fetes* ordered by their chief and prepared by the whole nation.

The emperor rejoiced at the sight of a calmer futurity, and his thoughts, fixed upon the internal administration, seemed to have become still more active. He caused a minute account to be given to him of every part of the administration, and sought in each of them what good there still remained to be done. He prepared a plan to secure to the princes of the imperial dynasty such an education as should render them worthy of him who founded it ; he established a system of great rewards for great services, the true manner of making high titles serve as a support to the state and a decoration to the throne ; a new organization given to the council of state instituted a slow and solemn discussion for the decision of contentious affairs ; a series of protecting and rigorous forms afforded to the complainant every facility for the production of his defence and his titles, and created for the depositaries of the public authority a new tribunal the censure of which is to be exerted against acts and abuses which are out of the reach of the positive laws. A commission placed in the very palace of the Emperor, and consisting of those whom he calls to discuss with him the greatest affairs of the state, opened to the throne a free access to all kinds of complaints or demands, charged to carry to the ears of the sovereign the voice of all his subjects, and especially of his subjects in poverty and misfortune ; an affecting institution which announces that he whose indefatigable vigilance takes such good care of the great interests of the state, is not less jealous, in his paternal solicitude, to provide against the least wants and the slightest grievances of all those over whom his Empire extends.

But the treaty of Presburg, which had restored peace to the continent, had not restored it to the sea, and England, constant in seeking her own safety in the misfortune of Europe, strove to make Russia continue the war, and to bring Prussia to determine upon hostile steps. These plots were defeated ; the treaty of Vienna and the convention of Paris dispelled all the clouds : it seemed that from henceforth the peace of the continent was no longer to be troubled ; Russia herself had felt the want of it, and her ministry, invested with her full powers, had just arrived at Paris.

England, carried away by the force of these circumstances, showed herself disposed to make peace, or rather, as her public discussions have since revealed, a truce, which would hardly have suspended for a moment, the effects of the hatred and jealousy with which she is animated against us. At the same time that she opened negociations, she prepared new intrigues, fully resolved to break them off, if she could contrive to rekindle the flame of continental war: she saw her guilty hopes triumphant ; the peace made with Russia was not ratified :

Prussia was agitated anew ; a madness without either motive or aim excited by the enemies of her repose, got the better of the combinations of the cabinet : hostile cries were heard, and war was declared, against the opinion of the ministers, and perhaps against the will of the king himself. A fatal example of the weakness of princes ! Still more fatal influence of a ministry who keep intriguers and libellers in pay ; who sow terror and calumny ; who excite all the passions the whirlwind of which may be of any use to them, and who, in the midst of all these plots, coolly calculate the advantages which may result, for their interests, from the dangers, nay, the very ruin of those whom they call their friends !

The Emperor set off. The English plenipotentiary, who, several times had announced his departure, did not delay to effect it ; and the incendiary rockets, let off by his fellow-countrymen, were devouring a few houses in Boulogne, when that minister of peace made his entrance into the town with a French escort, which watched over his safety, and paid this last homage to the character with which he had been so uselessly invested.

France was, during upwards of ten months, afflicted by the absence of the prince to whom all her affections, as well as all her destinies, are attached ; but the Emperor remained present to her in mind, and his genius watched over her ; his thoughts, from the borders of the Spree and of the Vistula, of the Pragel and of the Niemen, never ceased to embrace all the internal wants of the empire ; his thoughts animated every thing, maintained every where order and regularity, which are his work, and we only perceived his absence by the noise of his exploits, and by the regrets which he left in the hearts of us all. Whilst he visited the soldier's tent, raised on the snows of Lithuania, his look watched in France over the poor man's cottage, over the manufacturer's workshop. During this long interval, government was not afflicted with any troubles, it had not even the slightest disturbance to dread : France, at the period of a war, undertaken for the purpose of overwhelming her, preserved at home the most profound calm ; her territory was not violated for a single instant, the din of arms never reached her. Under the safeguard of victory, she saw passing far from her frontier the storm which envy and hatred had directed against her ; she saw this storm burst even on the countries where it had been gathering.

The laws every where executed with fidelity and without any effort, the privilege of good laws ; the contributions regularly acquitted, the roads travelled with safety, the administrators redoubling their zeal, our young soldiers setting out with joy upon the road of honor, the national guard watching round our habitations, and showing themselves by the regularity of their service, by their attitude and their discipline, equally fit for the double functions of protectors of public order and defenders of the state, all the branches of the service performed with facility, public opinion constantly faithful to the institutions which its wishes had recalled : such is the spectacle that presented itself to your eyes in your respective provinces, and to which we may here call your testimony ; such is the spectacle exhibited by that France, which henceforth her enemies despair of agitating, as they despair of vanquishing.

At the period at which we are arrived, if we still have to detain you with some new institutions, we shall much more have to show you the fruits of the institutions which exist ; this function is not less pleasing ; in confirming the past, it gives a new guarantee to the future. The electoral councils, and the general councils of departments, have shewn themselves animated with the best spirit : they have seen in the choice which the Emperor has made of the men called to preside over them, how desirous he is that these functions should be as much honored as they are honorable in themselves. The general councils must be assured that there is not one of the wishes which the sentiment of the public good inspires them with, but becomes the object of the particular attention of government, and is consulted with care in the examination of the affairs to which it relates ; the administration of the communes, that administration which his majesty looks upon as one of the most important for the welfare of his people, has been improved in several respects : its commission of accounts has received more expeditious and more enlightened forms. The Emperor hopes that they will prevent in future every arbitrary measure and all embezzlement, that the expences will be rigorously conformable to the budgets ; that the receipts will not be misrepresented, that the accounts, being drawn up with clearness and dispatch, will no longer be a subject of discussion. It is his pleasure also that the charters, that principal source of the communial wealth, be administered for the interest of the towns, to the advantage of those who inhabit them, and that the prefects, who are not to direct their administration, shall nevertheless exercise an active and enlightened watchfulness over them. The Emperor, who looks upon himself as the father of his subjects, will not lose sight of those municipal administrations, charged to provide their first necessaries, and will never tolerate either faults of negligence or enterprises of cupidity.

Government has in general been satisfied with the conduct of the mayors, not only of the mayors of great cities, whose functions his majesty has been pleased to exalt by repeated testimonies of his confidence, but of all the mayors, where noble devotedness, whatever be the sphere in which it exercises itself, rises to the height of their duties ; he has known and appreciated their services, and it is his intention to surround with a just consideration, the exercise of that paternal magistracy, by which the action of his power reaches the great majority of his subjects.

Equal honor be rendered to those respectable administrations, who from one one extremity of France to the other, devote themselves to the relief of misfortune, to comfort the afflicted !

It is grateful to one's feelings, upon this solemn occasion, to render homage to the zeal of those fathers of the poor, who, in doing good, seek no other reward than the pleasure of having done it. They will do still better ; the Emperor expects it from their zeal : every day, they will improve the order that should reign throughout the hospitals, and the economy that should be observed in the expenditure of their incomes ; they will find new resources in labor, seconded in a becoming manner by those charitable congregations, the pious messengers whom religion sends to misfortune, whom for some time persecution exiled far from affliction, whom the restorer of France has reinstated in that affecting dignity. You see these congregations multiplying in proportion to the wants which invoke their relief, and providing for future wants by the pupils whom they bring up. To what a degree is not private beneficence eager to second administrations thus directed? The bequests or donations made in behalf of the hospitals, have amounted, in capital, during the course of 1806 alone, to two millions three hundred thousand francs, authorised by five hundred successive decrees ; the endowment of these establishments has further increased by a new blessing of His Majesty, to a capital of fifteen millions six hundred thousand francs, by their being provisionally put in possession of several domains of the state, assigned for the replacing of their estates which were alienated during the revolution ; a grant which you will be called upon to ratify during the course of this session by a definitive concession. The ancient founders of hospitals have been re-established in the enjoyment of their dearest rights. A noble emulation has taken possession of generous minds ; it has opened schools, and opened workshops, the voice of morality has made its way into the prison, preceded by the relief of beneficence ; the laborious classes of society, guided by some virtuous men, have formed among themselves several useful associations, which serve for their improvement, at the same time that they prepare resources for them in times of misfortune. It was necessary, however, to provide against the advantage which greedy and hypocritical speculators might take of so respectable a disposition, or the errors which an imprudent zeal might lead to, and it has been wisely regulated that the establishments which employ the funds of the subscribers to take charge of a certain number of unfortunate persons, cannot contract such an engagement without the approbation of the public authority.

The manufactories have been put in the enjoyment of several kinds of revenues, the priest's houses restored ; numerous donations have augmented their resources.

The victims of the maritime war and of the violence of the enemy have received indemnities from his majesty, as soon as he was made acquainted with their losses.

The public salubrity has been the object of continual vigilance. Some epidemical diseases have manifested themselves in several parts. The zeal of the physicians sent by the prefects and sometimes from the capital itself, from the first symptoms of the evil, has put a stop to its progress ; the medicine chests sent by government have secured resources for the treatment of the poor. The *Monte de Piete* of Paris has been organised, others have been established in other parts of France.

Government begins to occupy itself with completing the plan for the repression of mendicity. The abbey of Fontervroult and Urselines of Montpellier are fitted up for the reception of depots from several departments ; that of Villiers-Cotteret, which is almost finished, will serve for the wants of the capital and its environs. Work continues to be successfully introduced into these depots as well as in the prisons ; whilst it furnishes new resources for the internal economy of these establishments, it corrects the morals of that class which society has justly discarded, and renders punishment useful to those who have deserved it. In almost all the houses of confinement & reclusion, places of worship have been re-established and chaplains appointed for the service of the altar, a measure which no less tends to effect this salutary reform.

The administration attaches a real glory to the complete execution of this system. If the persons are not yet what government wishes them to be, if the theoretical views which noble sentiments had inspired in the constituent assembly, were found to afford no means of being put in practice, these sentiments are too generous and too humane for government not to have been constantly animated with them and not uniformly to tend to the aim which they point out. The different classes of malefactors will, as much as possible, be kept separate, & he who by the error of a moment has exposed himself to the severity of the laws without incurring the indignation of society, will not be confounded with them. Attention will above all be paid to the salubrity of the places of confinement and to the care which the health of the prisoners requires. The succession of so many years during which to neglect or to destroy was what was best known and what was most ambitioned, has left in this respect an immense work which has been going on for these six years, and the completion of which will be one of the first blessings of peace.

The prisoners of war or rather the captive armies which victory sends us, employed in useful labors, have made their hands serve to fertilize that land which they thought to conquer.

Public works, briges and highways.

The general system of public works, applied at once and in so many ways over all parts of the Empire, is pursuing with a perseverance and an activity which the external circumstances do not slacken. Thirteen thousand four hundred leagues of road have been in different places kept up and repaired at the expence of the treasury ; the twenty seven principal roads which lead from the capital to all the frontiers of the Empire, have been the special theatre of these operations. The two greatest works executed for several centuries past, the roads of Mont-Cenis and of Simplon, the monuments of the art, worthy of those monuments of nature which art has vanquished, are accomplished after six years labor. Among the roads of another order, that from Spain to Italy, by mount Genevre, continues to be cut, and the branch which is to extend it to the department of the Isere will afford to a considerable part of France a more rapid and easy passage across the Alps. The Apennines in their turn are becoming the seat of active labors, which will join Piedmont to the Mediterranean, and complete the union of Liguria with France. The salutary regulations which proportions the breadth of the wheels to the weight of the carriage, is in activity, & its good effects are already felt.

The weigh-briges necessary for the execution of this regulation are all arrived at their destination, and their service begins in a few days.

Eighteen principal rivers have had their navigation improved or lengthened even by sluices ; their tow-roads restored or their course confined by dikes executed upon the Loire and the Charente.

The navigation of the Po is freed from all incumbrance. The Rhine is become the object of particular attention. The charter of navigation put in force upon every point, secures the means of delivering that fine river from the obstacles which impede its course.

Four bridges have been finished during this last campaign, or are on the point of being so. Ten others are in great forwardness : among this number are those of Roanne and of Tours. That from Strasburg to Kehl is beginning upon an ingenious plan, which will admit of its being taken down & set up again at pleasure with speed and economy. The *Pont Saint Esprit*, which could not afford a passage to any loaded carriage, has recovered the full utility of its service by the widening it has received. The *Pont Saint Nicolas* near Belfort, and that of Auberive upon the Vacaire, are neatly finished. That of Avignon has been contracted for ; government has purchased that of la Mulatiere, at the confluence of the Rhone and the Saone.

The canals, almost all begun under this reign, are digging without interruption. Among this number, that of the Ourcq is already carried three fourths or four fifths of its length. The two cuts of that of St. Quentin, which joins the Seine to the Scheld, Paris to Belgium and Holland—are made : they will be finished in 18 months, and the problem of that subterraneous navigation is resolved. All the works of art of that canal may be looked upon as finished ; that of the north, which joins the Scheld to the Rhine without passing through Holland, is begun in the port which extends from the Scheld to the Meuse ; it will unite Belgium to the departments of the Rhine, one conquest of France to another conquest, and these two countries astonished perhaps at finding themselves under the same dominion, will not be less so at a communication which their former possessors never would have executed, and which will not be the least benefit of their union to the empire. The works of the Canal Napoleon ; destined to join the North-Sea to the Mediterranean by a communication ; which embracing the course of the Rhone, the Saone and the Rhine, runs thro' France in her greatest length ; these works, I say, are undertaken and already in great forwardness along the whole line. The canals from Niort to la Rochelle ; from Lisle to la Rame, are in great forwardness ; Blavet advances rapidly ; that from Aiguemortes to Beaucaire has just been finished—the part of the canal of Bourgone, from Dijon to the Saone, will be navigable this year. Several others have been resumed or repaired ; all of them will be continued until they are entirely finished.

The maritime ports have also witnessed new creations. Antwerp boasts of dock-yards built as if by enchantment upon a soil become a stranger to all maritime construction. Antwerp, which in the days of its glory was but a commercial port, afterwards shut by a very blind or very timerous policy, Antwerp which was reduced to nothing, starts up as a centre of military marine. For the first time, ships of 74 and 80 guns are seen upon that part of the Scheld, 14 are upon the stocks, several have been launched, and after a difficult passage are safely and without example arrived at Flushing. The stocks of those that were launched were instantly occupied by new constructions. People flocked from all parts of Belgium, from Holland, from the borders of the Rhine, of the Meuse, of the Scheld to view this magnificent sight, to enjoy this conquest made in