

VERMONT.

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT,
On the subject of Texas, Slavery, the Slave Trade, &c.

FEBRUARY 14, 1838.
Read, and laid upon the table.

STATE OF VERMONT.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,
Montpelier, November 3, 1837.

SIR: In compliance with a request of the Senate and House of Representatives, I have the honor to enclose to your address the accompanying report and resolutions.

By his Excellency the Governor.

CHAUNCEY L. KNAPP,
Secretary of State.

LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT.

Texas, Slavery, the Slave trade, &c.

The committee to whom were referred numerous petitions of citizens in all parts of the State, praying that our Senators in Congress be instructed and our Representatives requested to use their influence to prevent the annexation by that body of Texas to the United States, and calling on the General Assembly of Vermont itself to protest against the same in any way being done; and to whom were also referred numerous memorials from various parts of the State, praying this honorable body to adopt resolutions declaring:

1st. That Congress has the constitutional power to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia;

2d. That it has the constitutional power to abolish them in the several Territories of the Union where they exist;

3d. That it has the constitutional power to prohibit the slave trade between the several States of the Union; and,

4th. That, in regard to all these particulars, Congress ought immediately to exercise that power.

Thomas Allen, print.

And to whom were also referred numerous petitions praying this honorable body to protest against the admission of any new State into this Union, whose constitution tolerates domestic slavery, have had the same under consideration, and beg leave to report as follows :

The committee have not been enabled to find, in the constitution of the United States, any provision delegating to Congress power to incorporate with our territory a separate and independent State. Such is Texas. It is true Congress possesses power to admit into the Union "new States;" but it is believed they must be those, and only those, whose constitutional forms of government are authorized and approved by the legislative sanction of that body.

The purchase of Louisiana and Florida, and the annexation of them to the territory of the Government, were, it is believed, assumptions of power on the part of the Government with which the constitution did not clothe that body. Popular approbation, added to the fact that these acquisitions were necessary to the safe and convenient use of our fellow-citizens of large sections of our country lying contiguous to them, prevented, at the time, any strong opposition to these acts of purchase, or any examination of a serious character into the authority by which they were done. But, leaving out of view what is thought to be a decisive constitutional inhibition of the annexation of Texas to the Union, there are other objections which seem insurmountable to the committee. The State of Mexico, of which Texas was one of the confederate provinces, and from which it has but lately been torn by violence, had adopted, and practically carried out, in her political organization, sentiments that, it seems to the committee, lie at the foundation of all just government, and which are thus happily set forth in the constitution of this State : "*All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent, and inalienable rights, among which are the enjoying and defending of life and liberty ; acquiring, possessing, and protecting property ; and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.*" Under the influence of these principles, Mexico, in a manner that won for her the augmented respect of the civilized world, had honorably abolished the system of slavery, that attached to her during her colonial dependence on the kingdom of Spain. Texas, on the other hand, no sooner had separated from Mexico and assumed an independent position, than she showed an utter disregard of these principles, and of the just respect of the great body of Christian nations, by incorporating indissolubly with her political system the enslavement—the unconditional and perpetual enslavement—of a part of the human family ; of that part, too, who, it seems to your committee, have already wept long enough over the wrongs and afflictions they have suffered from their brethren.

Against every form of oppression the people of Vermont have, at all times, borne honorable testimony. In their constitution, they have published to the world their everlasting opposition to all slavery—even down to the minutest and least revolting of its modifications. It would, then, be inconsistent in Vermont, it would prove that she had somewhat cooled in the favor of her love for liberty, should she consent to be drawn into close and fraternal bonds with a people who, beyond any yet known in modern times, have made the most deliberate and heartless assault on human freedom.

There is one other reason against this measure, that the committee

ought not to omit presenting to your honorable body. Its most industrious advocates urge it—not because our population, too crowded for our present bounds, justly call for others more extended; not because it is necessary to the unincumbered, safe, and profitable use and enjoyment of all the resources and advantages of any part of the territory we now possess; but for the avowed object of adding to and confirming the slaveholding influence in the management of the Government. The anarchy and disorder that now prevail in the South; the apparent overthrow, of late, of her own constitutional and legal barriers, erected for the security of the citizens, and the seeming want of power in her proper authorities to re-establish them; the illegal outrages which her own citizens, as well as those from the free States, have suffered for the last two or three years in the South, and to which, it would appear, up to this time, they are exposed; outrages that, so far as your committee have the means of information, have in many instances been provoked by an honorable advocacy of liberty, and a condemnation of slavery, not less honorable, or from a suspicion that the one was honored and the other detested; outrages that have been passed by unpunished and unnoticed by the proper tribunals where they have been perpetrated: these, and other fearful sacrifices of important interests by the North, demanded by the South to be offered up for the security of her peculiar institution; the surrender that she asks from us of the *freedom of speech; the liberty of the press; the right of petition*; all these united, inspire your committee with a well-founded apprehension that the additional weight which the annexation of Texas to the United States would give to the slaveholding interest in our political organization, would, in all probability, soon lead either to a dissolution of the Union, or to the political degradation of the free States, and eventually to the entire overthrow of their common liberties: Wherefore, the committee recommend the adoption by the General Assembly of the following resolutions.

W. R. RANNEY, }
MILTON BROWN, } *for Committee.*

1. *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our Representatives requested, to use their influence in that body to prevent the annexation of Texas to the Union.
2. *Resolved*, That representing as we do the people of Vermont, we do hereby, in their name, solemnly protest against such annexation in any form.
3. *Resolved*, That as the Representatives of the people of Vermont, we do solemnly protest against the admission into this Union of any State whose constitution tolerates domestic slavery.
4. *Resolved*, That Congress have full power, by the constitution, to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia and in the Territories of the United States.
5. *Resolved*, That Congress has the constitutional power to prohibit the slave trade between the several States of this Union, and to make such laws as shall effectually prohibit such trade.
6. *Resolved*, That our Senators in Congress be instructed, and our

Representatives requested, to present the foregoing report and resolutions to their respective Houses in Congress, and use their influence to carry the same speedily into effect.

7. *Resolved*, That the Governor of this State be requested to transmit a copy of the foregoing report and resolutions to the President of the United States, to the Executives of the several States, and to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

IN SENATE, *November 1, 1837.*

Resolutions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6, passed by the Senate.

Resolution numbered 7 amended, by striking out the words, "to the Executives of the several States," and passed by the Senate.

N. WILLIAMS, *Secretary.*

IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, *November 1, 1837.*

Resolutions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, passed by the House.

A. L. MINER, *Clerk.*

STATE OF VERMONT.

SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE,

Montpelier, November 3, 1837.

I hereby certify that the foregoing are true copies of records of proceedings in the Senate and House of Representatives, as appears by the files in this office.

CHAUNCEY L. KNAPP,
Secretary of State.