

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 199.

[1st SESSION.

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 20, 1806.

Mr. MITCHELL, from the committee to whom was referred the order of the Senate of the 5th December last, that inquiry be made whether a further appropriation ought not to be made for the augmentation of the Congressional library, made a report, (in part) as follows:

By the fifth section of the act, entitled "An act to make further provision for the removal and accommodation of the Government of the United States," passed 24th April, 1800, 5,000 dollars were appropriated for the purchase of such books as might be necessary for the use of Congress, then about to remove from Philadelphia and hold its sessions at Washington, and for fitting up a suitable chamber for containing them, and placing them therein. The Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives were directed to be the purchasers, pursuant to such directions as should be given, and such catalogue as should be furnished by a joint committee of both Houses of Congress. The account herewith exhibited shows in what manner, and to what amount, the money so appropriated has been expended.

Afterwards, by the sixth section of the "Act concerning the library for the use of both Houses of Congress" passed 26th January, 1802, the unexpended balance of the said 5,000 dollars, together with such sums as may be hereafter appropriated to the same purpose, is ordered to be laid out under the direction of a joint committee, to consist of three members of the Senate and three members of the House of Representatives, for the purchase of books and maps.

The committee almost hesitate to add a sentence, to enforce the propriety of increasing the number already bought for Congress. Every member knows that the inquiries of standing and select committees cannot here be aided by large public libraries, as in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. Nor has it hitherto appeared that so much benefit is to be derived from private collections at the present seat of Government, as in those large cities. Every week of the session causes additional regret that the volumes of literature and science, within the reach of the National Legislature, are not more rich and ample. The want of geographical illustrations is truly distressing; and the deficiency of historical and political works is scarcely less severely felt. There is, however, no danger of realizing the story of a *parliamentum indoctum* in this country, especially if steps be seasonably taken to furnish the library with such materials as will enable statesmen to be correct in their investigations, and, by a becoming display of erudition and research, give a higher dignity and a brighter lustre to truth.

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 200.

[1st SESSION.

## BRIDGE ACROSS THE POTOMAC AT WASHINGTON.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 21, 1806.

Mr. PHILIP R. THOMPSON, from the committee to whom were referred the petition of sundry inhabitants of the county of Alexandria, in the District of Columbia; the petition of sundry citizens of the United States, resident in the Territory of Columbia; the memorial of sundry inhabitants of Georgetown, in the District of Columbia; the memorial of sundry inhabitants of the city of Washington, residing on the west side of Tiber creek; and the memorial of John P. Van Ness, made the following report:

The petitions of the inhabitants of the town and county of Alexandria, and of the citizens resident in the Territory of Columbia, state: That an easy intercourse between the town of Alexandria and the city of Washington, which is at present prevented by the intervention of the river Potomac, is extremely desirable; that this intercourse is especially interrupted at that season of the year when the river is obstructed by ice; that a bridge from Maryland Avenue to Alexander's island would facilitate the communication, shorten the route of the mail at least six miles, and be generally beneficial to the citizens of the United States; that they are persuaded the bridge contemplated by their petitions will, at some period, be carried into effect, and they view the present time as the most favorable, both in relation to their own and the general convenience, and the interests of those who may be affected by the measure; and that, if the scheme shall be authorized by Congress, it will speedily be carried into effect. They pray that a law may pass to incorporate a company for erecting a bridge across the Potomac from the city of Washington to the county of Alexandria, in some convenient situation, under such regulations and restrictions as the Legislature may deem expedient.

In opposition to these petitions, the committee have referred to them the memorial of the proprietors and inhabitants of Georgetown, which states, that Georgetown was laid out under the sanction of law, previous to the revolution; that it was engaged in foreign commerce before the seat of Government was contemplated to be on the Potomac; that, being at the head of tide-water navigation, the proprietors must have made purchases and improvements with a view to foreign commerce, or some of the trade dependent on it, in the confident expectation that the river would remain free and unobstructed by artificial causes; particularly when they saw Maryland and Virginia make a solemn compact, whereby the river Potomac is declared a common highway for the purpose of navigation and commerce, the navigation whereof is not to be injured or obstructed. They consider that their natural and political rights will be infringed on by the adoption of this measure, as the navigation of the river will be injured and obstructed thereby; that from the meeting of the stream and tide water, at the place where the bridge is contemplated, a tendency will be produced in the impeded stream water to deposit the earthy particles with which it