

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 205.

[1st SESSION.]

JOURNALS OF CONGRESS UNDER THE CONFEDERATION.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 19, 1806.

Mr. JOSEPH CLAY, from the committee to whom was referred the petition of William Levis and Hugh Maxwell, made the following report:

That, on a member taking his seat in Congress for the first time, it has been heretofore customary to supply him with a copy of the journals of the Congress under the confederation. For this purpose, by a joint resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives, approved on the 2d day of March, 1799, the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House of Representatives were authorized and directed to subscribe for 400 copies of the said journals, then proposed to be published by Richard Folwell. Those copies were accordingly procured, and have been distributed to members of each Congress, until the present. At the meeting of the present Congress it has been found that only ten copies remain, which are by no means sufficient to supply those members who have not served a former Congress with one copy each.

The petitioners offer to furnish 130 copies, bound in boards, to be delivered at Washington, at \$16 a set. This is the price, including binding and the expense of transportation, at which former sets were furnished, and is, as the committee are informed, at a much less rate than that at which the journals could now be printed.

Provision ought, perhaps, to be made for printing at the public expense another edition of these important journals; this, however, is not a subject on which your committee will, at this time, offer an opinion; but they can see no reason why the members, who have now taken their seats in Congress for the first time should be denied those journals with which members of every former Congress have been supplied. They, therefore, recommend the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives be authorized and directed to purchase, for the use of the Senate and House of Representatives, from William Levis and Hugh Maxwell, 130 copies of Folwell's edition of the journals of the Congress under the confederation, at such price, not exceeding sixteen dollars per set, as they may deem eligible.

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 206.

[1st SESSION.]

CHESAPEAKE AND DELAWARE CANAL.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THE 5TH OF MARCH, 1806.

Mr. GREGG, from the committee to whom was referred the petition and memorial of the president and directors of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company, made the following report:

That it appears a company has been incorporated by the respective States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, for the purpose of forming a navigable canal over the isthmus which separates the bays of Chesapeake and Delaware; that, in pursuance of the several acts of incorporation passed by the said States respectively, a large number of subscriptions were made by divers citizens of the United States, and a board of president and directors were duly elected for carrying the project into effect.

That the said president and directors, in pursuance of their appointment, have procured skilful engineers to explore and survey the ground across the aforesaid isthmus, and have fixed on a route or position for the canal, calculated, as they conceive, in every respect, to secure the great and important purpose of an uninterrupted navigation, and have made considerable progress in the work. They find, however, that to accomplish it, a greater portion of fortitude and perseverance, and more ample resources, will be necessary, than the individuals who are embarked in it can be supposed to possess. The importance of the undertaking, and the immense national advantages which may ultimately result from it, they hope will be sufficient inducements to prevail on Congress to grant them such assistance as will enable them to complete the business agreeably to their original plan.

The committee cannot hesitate a moment in deciding on the importance and extensive utility of connecting the waters of the Chesapeake and Delaware by a navigable canal. To adopt a phrase familiarized by use, they consider the project as an opening wedge for an extensive inland navigation, which would at all times be of an immense advantage to the commercial as well as to the agricultural and manufacturing part of the community. But, in the event of a war, its advantages would be incalculable. The reasoning of the petitioners is conclusive on this point. If arguments are necessary, their petition furnishes an ample supply to prove that no system of internal improvement which has yet been proposed in this country holds out the prospect of such important national advantages as will naturally result from a successful termination of their undertaking.

Did the finances of the country admit of it, the committee would feel a perfect freedom in recommending to the House the propriety, in their opinion, of extending to the petitioners such aid as the difficulty and importance of their enterprise would be thought to justify. But it is a question whether, at this moment, the state of the treasury would admit of any pecuniary assistance being granted. The amount of the public debt yet to be extinguished, the embarrassed state of our commerce, and the critical situation of the country in relation to foreign Governments, might perhaps be considered as insurmountable objections against applying any public money to internal improvements at this particular time. Under an impression arising from these circumstances, the committee recommend the following resolution:

Resolved, That it would not be expedient, at this time, to grant any pecuniary assistance to the president and directors of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company.

[NOTE.—See report of Senate committee, No. 209.]