

14th CONGRESS.]

No. 418.

[2d SESSION.]

## ALTERATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 2, 1817.

Mr. WENDOVER made the following report:

The committee appointed to inquire into the expediency of altering the flag of the United States beg leave to report:

That they have maturely examined the subject submitted for their consideration, and are well aware that any proposition essentially to alter the flag of the United States, either in its general form, or in the distribution of its parts, would be as unacceptable to the Legislature and to the people as it would be incongenial with the views of the committee.

Fully persuaded that the form selected for the American flag was truly emblematical of our origin and existence as an independent nation, and that, as such, it has received the approbation and support of the citizens of the Union, it ought to undergo no change that would decrease its conspicuity, or tend to deprive it of its representative character. The committee, however, believe that a change in the number of States in the Union sufficiently indicates the propriety of such a change in the arrangement of the flag as shall best accord with the reasons that led to its adoption, and sufficiently point to important periods of our history.

The original flag of the United States was composed of thirteen stripes and thirteen stars, and was adopted by a resolution of the Continental Congress on the 14th of June, 1777. On the 13th of January, 1794, after two new States had been admitted into the Union, the National Legislature passed an act that the stripes and stars should on a day fixed be increased to fifteen each, to comport with the then number of independent States. The accession of new States since that alteration, and the certain prospect that at no distant period the number of States will be considerably multiplied, render it, in the opinion of the committee, highly inexpedient to increase the number of stripes, as every flag must in some measure be limited in its size, from the circumstance of convenience to the place on which it is to be displayed, while such an increase would necessarily decrease their magnitude, and render them proportionably less distinct to distant observation: this consideration has induced many to retain only the general form of the flag, while there actually exists a great want of uniformity in its adjustment, particularly when used on small private vessels.

The national flag being in general use by vessels of almost every description, it appears to the committee of considerable importance to adopt some arrangement calculated to prevent in future great or expensive alterations. Under these impressions, they are led to believe no alteration could be made more emblematical of our origin and present existence, as composed of a number of independent and united States, than to reduce the stripes to the original thirteen, representing the number of States then contending for and happily achieving their independence; and to increase the stars to correspond with the number of States now in the Union, and hereafter to add one star to the flag whenever a new State shall be fully admitted.

These slight alterations will, in the opinion of the committee, meet the general approbation, as well of those who may have regretted a former departure from the original flag, as of such as are solicitous to see in it a representation of every State in the Union.

The committee cannot believe that, in retaining only thirteen stripes, it necessarily follows they should be distinctly considered in reference to certain individual States, inasmuch as nearly all the new States were a component part of, and represented in, the original States; and inasmuch, also, as the flag is intended to signify numbers, and not local and particular sections of the Union.

The committee respectfully report a bill.

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[2d SESSION.]

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, ON THE 6TH JANUARY, 1817.

Mr. FROMENTIN, from the Joint Library Committee, made the following report:

That, in pursuance of the duty devolving upon them to purchase books for the library of Congress, they have bought, during the recess, the books, a catalogue of which, with the prices and the names of the persons from whom they were bought, is annexed.

By a reference to the accounts rendered by Joseph Nourse, Register of the Treasury, and acting as agent of the Joint Library Committee, which are annexed to, and the committee pray may be considered as part of their report, it appears that, since the last account rendered, there was paid, at different times, by order of the Joint Library Committee, a sum of \$3,074 09, leaving in the hands of the agent of the Library Committee, subject to their order, an unexpended balance of \$1,526 61. The committee have now under consideration several proposals, which, when finally acted upon, shall have employed the whole of the appropriation made in 1812.

The committee further report that they have given direction for the following periodical (both literary and political) publications to be regularly sent to the library as soon as published, to wit:

The Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews, republished in New York.

The British Review,	}	published in Great Britain.
The Annual Register,		
The Analytical Review,		
Cobbett's Political Register,		
The North American Review,		published in Boston.
The Portfolio,	}	published in Philadelphia.
The Analectic Magazine,		
Walsh's American Register,		
The Portico,	}	published in Baltimore.
The Weekly Register,		
The National Register,	}	published in Washington.
The Daily National Intelligencer,		
The Historical Register,		

All the above periodical works now are, or will soon be, completed from the beginning of publication to the present day.

Of not exactly the same character, but yet liable to the same annual expense, are the following works, (if it be deemed advisable to complete the publications of this description which are now deposited in the library,) to wit:

The Transactions of the American Philosophical Society.  
 The Transactions of the Royal Society of London.  
 The Transactions of the Irish Academy.  
 Bath Society's papers.  
 Transactions of the Society of Arts.  
 Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences.  
 Mémoires de l'Institut de France.  
 Delaplaine's Repository.  
 Cobbett's State Trials.  
 Public Characters.

General catalogues, published every year in Great Britain, in Leipsic, and in Paris; to which may be added works of merit, to be subscribed for occasionally, and which will require a disposable fund to be used on the emergencies created by the publication of such works either in this country or in Europe.

In order the better to promote the views of Congress in establishing a congressional library, and the more securely to provide for, as far as attainable, a proportionately equal application of the library fund to the several branches of human knowledge, and thereby stamp the congressional library with that degree of usefulness contemplated in its establishment, the committee invite the chairmen of the several committees in both Houses to furnish the Library Committee with a list of such books or indexes as may be deemed by them more particularly to refer to the business devolving upon each respective committee.

The committee have, moreover, directed to be placed in the library a box, where may be deposited, by the members of both Houses, the titles of such books as they may be desirous to procure.

The collection of law books now in the library is as valuable and as complete as it is possible to have expected it to be, considering the time at which the books were purchased; but the many late publications which have appeared since, both in this country and in Europe, and the indispensable necessity of laying open all possible sources of the most extensive information on that head, have induced your committee to propose to Congress to appropriate a sum of \$3,000 for the completion of that particular department of the library of Congress.

The law appropriating \$1,000 per annum for the purchase of books for the library of Congress has expired. The committee beg leave to report a bill making a further appropriation of \$1,500 per annum for five years.

In revising the laws passed by Congress concerning the library, the committee observed that no provision had ever been made to extend to the heads of Departments the privilege of using the books in the Congress library on the same terms on which members of Congress are permitted to use them. In the bill making a further appropriation for the purchase of books, the committee have inserted a section to remedy that omission.

14th CONGRESS.]

No. 420.

[2d SESSION.]

## REPEAL OF THE POWER EXERCISED BY THE PRESIDENT TO TRANSFER APPROPRIATIONS FROM ONE OBJECT TO ANOTHER.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JANUARY 6, 1817.

SIR:

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *January 1, 1817.*

Your letter of the 31st ultimo, enclosing a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 30th ultimo, directing the Committee of Ways and Means to inquire into the expediency of repealing so much of the act "further to amend the several acts for the establishment and regulation of the Treasury, War, and Navy Departments," passed the 3d of March, 1809, as authorizes the President of the United States to transfer appropriations, has been received.

In giving my opinion upon the subject-matter of the resolution, it may be proper to state the causes which led to the adoption of the law, embracing the provision which is contemplated to be repealed by the resolution. Antecedent to that period the appropriations were, by some of the Departments, considered as an aggregate sum to be applied, without distinction in their accounts, to every branch of service embraced by the appropriation. In the Navy Department, for instance, there was but one account opened in the Treasury books, because the requisitions made by the Department were drawn for the Navy Department generally, and the sums thus drawn were applied