

[21st CONGRESS.]

No. 104.

[2d SESSION.]

## SUNDAY MAILS.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 24, 1831.

At a large and respectable meeting of the citizens of Windham county, convened, agreeably to previous notice, at the hall of E. Lincoln, in Wilmington, on the 12th day of January, 1831, General Abner Perry, of Dover, was called to the chair, and Samuel P. Skinner appointed secretary.

On motion, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That we disapprove of the measures adopted by a certain party, styling themselves the Christian party in politics, which, under moral and religious pretences, are officiously and unremittingly intermeddling with the religious opinions of others, and endeavoring to effect, by law, and other means equally exceptionable, a systematic course of measures, which, we believe, are tending to favor the dominancy of particular creeds, militating against the equal rights and liberties of all, infusing a spirit of religious intolerance and persecution into the political institutions of the country, and which, unless opposed, will result in a union of church and state, a change in the character of our Government, and the destruction of the civil and religious liberties of the people.

*Resolved*, That a committee of seven be appointed to draught resolutions expressive of the sense of this convention.

*Resolved*, That a committee of seven be appointed to draught a memorial to Congress against the petitions for a proposed restriction of the post office regulation in relation to Sabbath mails.

In pursuance of the second resolution, the following gentlemen were appointed a committee: H. H. Winchester of Marlborough, General Aaron Barney of Guilford, Ebenezer Jones, Esq. of Dover, Jonathan Flagg, Esq. of Wilmington, Silas Lamb of Newfane, Rufus Carley of Whitingham, and James Plumb of Halifax.

In pursuance of the third resolution, the following gentlemen were appointed a committee: Hon. John Roberts of Whitingham, Colonel John Pulsipher of Wilmington, Russel Fitch, Esq. of Brattleborough, J. D. Bradley, Esq. of Westminster, E. Ranson, Esq. of Townshend, R. M. Field, Esq. of Newfane, and Colonel William Acherson of Rockingham.

On motion, it was unanimously voted to adjourn this convention to meet again on the 19th instant, at the hall of Anthony Jones, in Newfane, at 11 o'clock, A. M., when and where the friends of civil and religious liberty in the county of Windham are respectfully invited to attend.

*Voted*, That the proceedings of this convention be signed by the chairman and secretary, and a copy thereof transmitted to the printer of the Brattleborough Messenger, with a request that he publish the same.

S. P. SKINNER, *Secretary*.ABNER PERRY, *Chairman*.

At an adjourned meeting of the friends of civil and religious liberty in the county of Windham, holden at the court-house in Newfane, on the 19th day of January, 1831, General Abner Perry in the chair, the following memorial was reported by R. M. Field, Esq., chairman of the committee appointed to draught the same:

*To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled: The memorial of the undersigned, in behalf of the citizens of the county of Windham and State of Vermont, respectfully represents:*

That your memorialists have observed with unfeigned concern the efforts which have been made, and, as they believe, are still being made, to procure the passage of a law of Congress, prohibiting the transportation of the mail on the first day of the week; and, although your memorialists repose entire confidence in the wisdom of the national councils, yet are they impelled, by a sincere conviction of the pernicious tendency of the proposed law, to approach your honorable bodies, and respectfully submit their views to your consideration.

Your memorialists would not have deemed it their duty to come before the National Legislature at this time with any expression of their sentiments, if the petitioners against Sunday mails had founded their request in motives of state expediency or public convenience; but they have remarked, with anxiety and alarm, that the proposed law is solicited on the assumed ground that the first day of the week is set apart by God for rest and religious worship. This request is a source of anxiety to your memorialists, because it presents to your honorable bodies a question of a purely religious nature; and of alarm, because the decision of that question necessarily involves a principle dangerous, as they believe, to the rights and liberties of the citizen.

Your memorialists will here observe, that the divine institution of the Sabbath, upon which the request of the petitioners is founded, is by no means assented to by the whole Christian church. On the contrary, many learned and pious prelates have contended, with great force of argument, that the Sabbath was an ordinance applicable only to the Jewish nation, and that it was abolished, along with the other Jewish ordinances, on the coming of Christ. Your memorialists are disposed to waive the discussion of the merits of this theological controversy, as well from a regard to the unprofitable nature of the controversy, as from the consideration that they are addressing not an oecumenical council of the church, but the constituted organs of civil government. But believing, as your memorialists do, that, in the passage of the proposed law, the power of Congress to decide this religious dispute, to determine the divine institution of the Christian Sabbath, and to declare its inviolability, is necessarily implied, they will meet the question on the simple ground that no such power is vested in your honorable bodies, and that its exercise would be repugnant to the spirit of our institutions and the letter of the constitution. The Government of these States embraces within the pale of its protection the followers of various religions and sects, distinguished by different and often opposite rules of faith, doctrines, and modes of worship. To all these, whether Jews, Mahometans, Pagans, or Christians, it is the design of the constitution and the duty of the Legislature to extend equal rights and privileges. To recognise by law the divine origin of the tenets of one sect, to the exclusion of others, would be partial and unjust; and to give a legislative sanction to the truth of the dogmas of all, would be manifestly absurd. Nor could it fail to be perceived that, as the mysterious and unseen things of religious faith are confessedly above the grasp of human reason, so are they beyond the sphere of human legislation. To avoid, therefore, the injustice of partial legislation and the inconsistency of rectifying contradictory tenets, and also from a regard to the imperfection of human laws, when applied to the sublime mysteries of theology, all wise government has limited its action to civil and political rights and relations alone, the only legitimate subjects of its cognisance; while the religious doctrines and observances of the citizen are left to the direction of his own reason, aided by such manifestations of the divine will as God has vouchsafed to give to his creatures. Upon these principles it is believed that civil authority has been delegated to Congress, and upon them that authority has hitherto been most scrupulously administered. Your memorialists consider the proposed law as inconsistent with those principles, and a clear deviation from that established course of government which reason dictates, and the experience of more than fifty years has sanctioned by the happiest results. They are not, indeed, insensible to the many artful pretexts by which the petitioners have endeavored to conceal their object, for the purpose of escaping from the odium which would justly attach to any request for the legal confirmation of a religious tenet. And while your memorialists condemn the pious fraud which would deceive and mislead the public mind in order to aggrandize a sect, they do not fail to recognise in that fraud a reluctant tribute to the truth of those principles for which they are contending. But, stripped of the disguise in which it is enveloped, and reduced to a plain

and intelligible proposition, the request of the petitioners amounts, in the opinion of your memorialists, to nothing less than a prayer to your honorable bodies to incorporate a sectarian dogma into the statutes of the land.

Your memorialists also believe that the proposed measure is obnoxious to an insurmountable objection, derived from that clause of the constitution which prohibits Congress from passing any law respecting an establishment of religion. The cautious phraseology in which this prohibition is expressed is worthy of notice, as evincing an extreme jealousy of all governmental interference in matters of religion. Your memorialists confess themselves incapable of conceiving any method of establishing a religion, unless it be by the establishment of its tenets; nor are they able to discover any principle which authorizes your honorable bodies to make one dogma of Christians part and parcel of the law of the land, which does not also justify the transposition of their entire creed into the civil code. A religion, thus taken into the special favor of the Legislature, and all its doctrines, rites, and ceremonies ratified and promulgated by act of legislation, would constitute an establishment as firm and as perfect as the most zealous bigot could well desire. It would require but an additional act, enjoining conformity upon the citizen under pains and penalties, to vie with the corrupt establishments of Europe, during the darkest period of ecclesiastical tyranny. Such are the theoretical results of the principle assumed by the petitioners, and such might be its practical consequences. Your memorialists are, therefore, constrained to believe that the proposed measure may justly be classed under that species of pernicious legislation against which the prohibitory clause of the constitution just mentioned is specially directed. It is, indeed, objected by respectable authority that the refusal of Congress to prohibit Sunday mails amounts to a decision upon the divine institution of the Sabbath adverse to the petitioners. To this conclusion your memorialists are unable to bow. Its fallacy lies on the surface, and evidently consists in mingling two distinct inquiries. The divine law is one question, but the power of your honorable bodies to declare that law is quite another; yet the objection confounds both together, and, by a wretched logic, perverts a refusal to take cognisance of a religious controversy into a decision of the merits of that controversy.

Your memorialists cannot discover any real force in the arguments by which the petitioners against Sunday mails have endeavored to fortify their request. The petitioners object that the present law compels the citizen to violate the Sabbath. If, by this objection, they mean to affirm that there is any legal compulsion in the case, the position is evidently false, inasmuch as all contracts with the Post Office Department are purely voluntary; but if they intend a moral compulsion arising from pecuniary inducements, then, indeed, it has been well answered that their affected piety becomes the mere pretext of a mercenary speculation.

The prohibition of Sunday mails is also defended on the ground that the conscience of the Christian is wounded by what he considers a profanation of holy time. This reason seems to your memorialists entirely unsatisfactory; for, although they would deprecate the infliction of unnecessary pain upon the feelings of any religious sect in the community, they cannot assent to a doctrine by which the operations of Government would be necessarily thwarted, and public convenience sacrificed. Neither does the doctrine seem to be susceptible of any just limitation. The Jew, who rests on the seventh day, and the Mahometan, who regards the sixth as sanctified by God and his prophet, may possess consciences as tender as, under this Government, they surely have rights assacred, as the Christian; yet they witness the like profanation of sacred time. Nor has it ever been supposed that national wrongs were to remain unredressed, or insulted national honor unavenged by arms, because a numerous and respectable sect could not look upon warfare with conscientious composure. If the consciences of Christians be so rigid and unbending that they cannot attend to the business of the post office on Sunday, they already receive, in an exemption from duties which they cannot conscientiously perform, all that they can reasonably demand, or the Government with propriety or safety grant. Nor is it difficult, in the opinion of your memorialists, to detect in the request of the petitioners a masked intolerance, which, under the pretext of a wounded conscience, would dictate to all mankind their religious faith and observances. In conclusion, your memorialists would remark, that, as the immediate effect of the proposed law would be the aggrandizement of a sect, so its tendency would be to produce an ultimate union of church and state; and your memorialists do not hesitate to avow their sincere belief that this tendency has mainly instigated the efforts of the petitioners. To no other motive can be imputed the ardor with which those religionists are pressing into the halls of legislation to ingraft their dogmas on the statute book; and to no other cause can be ascribed their intemperate zeal, which, in the pursuit of its object, disregards the constitutional barriers erected against ecclesiastical usurpation.

Against the union of church and state all history raises its warning voice. Religion becomes corrupted and debased by the alliance, and sinks into an intolerant superstition; and civil liberty never yet found a deadlier foe than bigotry armed with the sword of temporal power. Nor are your memorialists deluded by any professions of benevolent motives on the part of the petitioners. They recognise in those professions the common artifice of ecclesiastical ambition—of that ambition which deceives only to destroy; which rears in its van the emblems of meekness, charity, and philanthropy, and carries in its train the engines of persecution, torture, and massacre; which commences with soothing flattery, and ends in a furious and brutalizing tyranny; which sweeps from its path every vestige of civil and religious liberty, and perishes at last (as perish it must) gorged with human blood, the victim of its own detestable depravity. Benevolence was the pretext of the papal tyranny and its sanguinary persecutions. The massacre of St. Bartholomew's, the butcheries of the inquisition, and the atrocities without number which stain every page of the Christian annals, were all committed in the name of a merciful God, and through a zeal for the reform of his orthodox church.

The true religion of the mild and merciful Jesus, like her author, is meek and humble: she never aspired to earthly dominion, or sought aid from the arm of civil power; the sceptre and the diadem of temporal sovereignty are as a brittle reed in her hand and a crown of thorns on her head. Relying on her own excellencies, she defies all human opposition, and spurns away the support of all human legislation, as a species of defence suited only to a false and bloody superstition.

Your memorialists rely with implicit confidence on the wisdom and firmness of your honorable bodies in protecting the civil and religious rights of your memorialists and their fellow-citizens from ecclesiastical encroachments.

On motion of E. Ranson, Esq. of Townshend, the foregoing memorial was unanimously adopted.

The following resolutions, reported by the committee appointed to draught the same, were unanimously adopted:

*Resolved*, That all men have a natural and unalienable right to adopt such modes of worship and such a religious faith as their judgment shall dictate, and that no power is delegated to any legislative body in this country to contravene this right; and that any attempts to settle by law contested or disputed points of religious belief, or to enforce by legislative enactment a construction of the word of God, would be a gross violation of the rights of conscience, and a palpable infraction of the constitution.

*Resolved*, That all legislative enactments intended to prohibit the transportation and opening the mail on the first day of the week are opposed to the spirit and letter of that constitution, which forbids a preference of one religious sect over another, and guarantees equal rights and privileges to all.

*Resolved*, That we discover, with regret and alarm, in the indefatigable efforts of the Christian party in politics, the germ of that most horrible tyranny, the tyranny of priestcraft, which has for ages wrested from the nations of Europe those inestimable privileges, religious liberty and the rights of conscience.

*Resolved*, That Colonel R. M. Johnson is entitled to the applause and gratitude of his countrymen for his bold and manly efforts in resisting the repeated attempts of the Christian party in politics in obtaining the passage of a law prohibiting the opening and transportation of the mail on the first day of the week, and for his able and talented reports against the prayer of the various petitions for the same.

*Resolved*, As the sense of this convention, that a committee of five be appointed, who shall be denominated the Central Committee of Vigilance for the county of Windham, whose duty it shall be to call future meetings at such times and places as they shall deem expedient, and to correspond with like committees which now are or may hereafter be appointed in other counties in this State.

In pursuance of the last resolution, the following gentlemen were appointed a committee: Hon. John Roberts of Whitingham, General Aaron Barney of Guilford, Ebenezer Jones, Esq. of Dover, Thaddeus Alexander, Esq. of Athens, and Colonel William Acherson of Rockingham.

On motion of General M. Field,

*Resolved*, That our Senators and Representatives in Congress be requested to oppose the passage of any law prohibiting the opening and transportation of the mail on the first day of the week.

*Resolved*, That the foregoing memorial and resolutions, with the proceedings of this convention, be signed by the chairman and secretary, and a copy thereof transmitted to Congress; and that like copies be transmitted to the editors of the Boston Trumpet and Brattleborough Messenger, with a request that the same be published.

ABNER PERRY, *Chairman*.

S. P. SKINNER, *Secretary*.

21st CONGRESS.]

No. 105.

[2d Session.]

NETT AMOUNT OF POSTAGE ACCRUING AT EACH POST OFFICE, FOR THE YEAR  
ENDING MARCH 31, 1830.

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 28, 1831.

SIR: POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, *February 26, 1831.*

In obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives passed March 1, 1825, I have the honor to transmit you, herewith, a statement of the nett amount of postage accruing at each post office in each State and Territory of the United States, for one year ending March 31, 1830; and showing the nett amount accruing in each State and Territory.

With great respect, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

W. T. BARRY.

The Hon. ANDREW STEVENSON,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

*A statement of the nett amount of postages accruing at each post office in each State and Territory of the United States, for one year ending March 31, 1830; and showing the nett amount accruing in each State and Territory; made in obedience to a resolution of the House of Representatives, passed March 1, 1825.*

MAINE.

|                        |          |                           |          |                           |        |
|------------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------|---------------------------|--------|
| Abbot, - - -           | \$11 89  | Calais, - - -             | \$547 60 | East Brewer, - - -        | \$4 22 |
| Addison Point, - - -   | 16 68    | Camden, - - -             | 289 30   | East Corinth, - - -       | 11 66  |
| Albany, - - -          | 12 05    | Canaan, - - -             | 33 61    | East Dixfield, - - -      | 2 62   |
| Albion, - - -          | 60 21    | Canton, - - -             | 23 75    | East Elliot, - - -        | 18 61  |
| Alfred, - - -          | 24 63    | Cape Noddick, - - -       | 34 94    | East Howland, - - -       | 4 08   |
| Alna, - - -            | 61 17    | Carmel, - - -             | 11 51    | East Livermore, - - -     | 21 90  |
| Andover, - - -         | 34 55    | Carthage, - - -           | 7 06     | East Machias, - - -       | 182 90 |
| Anson, - - -           | 86 14    | Castine, - - -            | 556 74   | East Madison, - - -       | 4 13   |
| Appleton, - - -        | 34 00    | Centre Minot, - - -       | 12 33    | East Minot, - - -         | 1 06   |
| Athens, - - -          | 71 21    | Centre Sidney, - - -      | 13 71    | East Pittston, - - -      | 15 32  |
| Atkinson, - - -        | 30 25    | Charleston, - - -         | 34 35    | East Pond, - - -          | 66     |
| Augusta, - - -         | 820 90   | Chesterville, - - -       | 37 50    | Eastport, - - -           | 800 81 |
| Avon, - - -            | 5 66     | China, - - -              | 135 79   | East Redfield, - - -      | 13 10  |
| Bald Hill, - - -       | 6 10     | Clinton, - - -            | 42 28    | East Rumford, - - -       | 8 73   |
| Baldwin, - - -         | 20 13    | Columbia, - - -           | 60 28    | East Shapleigh, - - -     | 16 20  |
| Bangor, - - -          | 1,760 32 | Concord, - - -            | 5 69     | East Thomaston, - - -     | 114 34 |
| Bath, - - -            | 1,033 75 | Cooper, - - -             | 10 19    | East Turner, - - -        | 3 75   |
| Belfast, - - -         | 792 45   | Chandlerville, - - -      | 8 94     | East Vassalborough, - - - | 48 50  |
| Belgrade, - - -        | 18 95    | Corinna, - - -            | 23 51    | East Wilton, - - -        | 13 31  |
| Belgrade Mills, - - -  | 1 74     | Corinth, - - -            | 19 51    | East Winthrop, - - -      | 15 56  |
| Belmont, - - -         | 23 51    | Cornish, - - -            | 33 30    | Eddington, - - -          | 21 42  |
| Berwick, - - -         | 36 88    | Cooper's Mills, - - -     | 2 02     | Eden, - - -               | 61 88  |
| Bethel, - - -          | 50 74    | Cornishville, - - -       | 9 50     | Edgecomb, - - -           | 19 69  |
| Bingham, - - -         | 27 98    | Cornville, - - -          | 13 07    | Elliot, - - -             | 22 26  |
| Blakesburg, - - -      | 19 76    | Craigie's Mills, - - -    | 47 99    | Ellsworth, - - -          | 320 01 |
| Bloomfield, - - -      | 70 37    | Cumberland, - - -         | 46 92    | Embden, - - -             | 8 59   |
| Blue Hill, - - -       | 102 55   | Cumberland Centre, - - -  | 12 13    | Emeria's Mills, - - -     | 50 35  |
| Bolster's Mills, - - - | 13 00    | Cumberland East, - - -    | 44 97    | Etna, - - -               | 9 16   |
| Boothbay, - - -        | 78 90    | Damariscotta Mills, - - - | 49 84    | Exeter, - - -             | 62 37  |
| Bowdoin, - - -         | 20 90    | Dam's Mills, - - -        | 18 86    | Factory Village, - - -    | 36 72  |
| Bowdoinham, - - -      | 181 99   | Danville, - - -           | 23 54    | Fairfield, - - -          | 39 90  |
| Brewer, - - -          | 40 93    | Dearborn, - - -           | 5 40     | Fairfield Corners, - - -  | 14 49  |
| Brewer Village, - - -  | 47 10    | Deer Isle, - - -          | 79 30    | Farmington, - - -         | 116 09 |
| Bridgeton, - - -       | 63 14    | Denmark, - - -            | 17 66    | Farmington Falls, - - -   | 27 56  |
| Bristol, - - -         | 62 45    | Dennysville, - - -        | 43 94    | Fayette, - - -            | 27 86  |
| Bristol Mills, - - -   | 61 04    | Dexter, - - -             | 58 85    | Foxcroft, - - -           | 36 28  |
| Brooks, - - -          | 25 09    | Dixfield, - - -           | 44 83    | Frankfort, - - -          | 227 87 |
| Brookville, - - -      | 11 36    | Dixmont, - - -            | 49 91    | Freedom, - - -            | 9 45   |
| Brownfield, - - -      | 26 40    | Dover, - - -              | 45 79    | Freeport, - - -           | 141 65 |
| Brown's Corner, - - -  | 49 32    | Dresden, - - -            | 56 16    | Fryburg, - - -            | 115 78 |
| Brownsville, - - -     | 15 02    | Dresden Mills, - - -      | 40 89    | Gardiner, - - -           | 799 67 |
| Brunswick, - - -       | 853 97   | Durham, - - -             | 43 12    | Garland, - - -            | 32 62  |
| Buckfield, - - -       | 52 84    | Dutton, - - -             | 5 54     | Gilead, - - -             | 10 92  |
| Bucksport, - - -       | 336 30   | East Alna, - - -          | 2 29     | Goff's Corners, - - -     | 21 29  |
| Buxton, - - -          | 53 00    | East Baldwin, - - -       | 7 16     | Gorham, - - -             | 160 98 |
| Buxton Centre, - - -   | 26 73    | East Bethel, - - -        | 8 11     | Gouldsborough, - - -      | 32 70  |