

be authorised to sentence the offenders to fine and close imprisonment in the county jails, but few offences are committed for which confinement in the penitentiary five years would be a disproportionate punishment.

2. Your committee also recommend that for all offences committed by free negroes, new punishments be devised, that they be sold for terms of years or for life, according to the degree of the offence, and banished—such punishments will operate more completely to deter them from the commission of crimes, than confinement in the penitentiary for life.

3. Your committee further recommend that a tread mill on a small scale, to cost about 1500 dollars, be erected in the penitentiary, to answer two purposes; first, to serve as a punishment for the most refractory and ferocious of the criminals; and secondly, it may be made to turn a mill by which all the grain used in the establishment may be ground. If the legislature should deem it inexpedient to erect a tread mill of the above description, the committee would suggest the propriety of employing the most robust of the criminals on the public roads or digging canals. None but females and males of weak and infirm constitutions, or those advanced in years ought to be employed in sedentary manufactures.

4. The power of pardoning or commuting the sentences of criminals should be taken from the executive, not that your committee believe that branch of the government will abuse such a prerogative, but they are well convinced, that pardons are granted upon ex parte statements and sometimes extorted by bold and harrassing importunity and solicitation.

The above alterations with others of interior note which might be suggested, (which your committee deem it unnecessary to explain and enforce in detail, as they come more immediately within the duties of the committee appointed for the purpose,) your committee believe would be salutary, and that the penitentiary may be rendered a cheap and useful institution, that by reorganizing it entirely, and if the attention of the legislature be directed to it sedulously for the purpose of reform, instead of a nursery of crime, as it now is, it may be made the engine by which the state may carry into complete effect and practical operation its existing mild system of laws respecting crimes and punishments. If on the other hand the penitentiary is to remain in its present situation, your committee recommend that it be immediately abolished. All which is submitted.

JOHN R. W. PITT, Chairman.

On motion by Mr. Pitt the following message was read:

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, Jan. 13, 1824.

*Gentlemen of the Senate*—The repeated attempts every session of the legislature to change the constitution, and the facility, by which amendments and alterations to that instrument have been made, induce us to believe, that a revision of it is a measure highly necessary, and if judiciously done will be acceptable to the people of the state. We propose therefore, that a joint committee to consist of five members on the part of this house, and three on the part of your honorable body, be appointed to revise the constitution, to engraft on it all the amendments which have been made to it since its adoption, and that the constitution so revised and reduced into system, be published in the votes and proceedings, and the various newspapers in the state, for the consideration and reflection of the people.

The house adjourns until to-morrow morning 9 o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, January 14, 1824.

The house met. Present the same members as on yesterday. The proceedings of yesterday were read.

The bill relating to the public roads in Somerset and Dorchester counties; and the bill relating to the recovery of fines under the by-laws of the corporation of the city of Annapolis; were read the second time, passed and sent to the senate.

Mr. Johnson presents a memorial from Kitura Branham, praying that a lease from Lloyd Ford may be made valid; referred to Messrs. Johnson and J. T. H. Worthington and Ely.

The bill for the revaluation of real and personal property in Anne Arundel and Allegany counties; was read the second time, passed and sent to the senate.

On motion by Mr. Meconiken, ordered that Mr. Boon be added to the committee appointed on a petition of sundry inhabitants of Hillsborough.

The speaker laid before the house a return of the attendance of the judges from the clerk of Calvert county, and the order relative to the purchase of three copies of the new American Atlas; was read the second time and assented to.

Mr. Bryan reports a bill entitled, an act to alter and change the place of holding the elections in the first election district in Cecil county.

Mr. Edmund B. Duvall presents a petition from Fielder Cross, collector of the state revenue for Prince George's county, praying further term to complete said collection; referred to Messrs. E. B. Duvall, Clarke and Semmes.

Mr. Ireland reports a bill entitled, an act for the relief of Mary Meginnis. On motion by Mr. Millard, ordered that a committee of three be appointed to examine and report the state and condition of the records in the office of the court of appeals for the western shore; ordered that Messrs. Millard, Gough and Edelin be said committee.

Mr. Sewall presents a petition from sundry inhabitants of Harford county for the passage of a law to authorise the levy court of said county to open a road in said county; referred to Messrs. Sewall, Whiteford and Steel; and Mr. Norris delivers a petition from sundry inhabitants of Harford county, counter thereto; referred to the same committee.

The clerk of the senate returns the bill to exempt the servants of overseers of the county