

Mr. Cromwell presents a petition from sundry officers commanding uniform rifle companies in Frederick county, praying to be authorised to form a regiment of riflemen, within the limits of the 20th, 29th and 47th regiments; and to choose their field and staff officers. Referred to the committee on military affairs.

Mr. M. Mahon delivers the following report:

The committee appointed "to consider upon and devise some efficient and practicable plan of relieving the pecuniary distresses of the people of this state, and of ameliorating the various interests of the state," &c. &c. &c. to whom was referred the petition of many citizens of Frederick county, praying the attention of the legislature to the present calamitous condition of the state, and requesting the adoption of some measures which may have a tendency to relieve her citizens from the pecuniary difficulties in which they are at present involved; beg leave to report—That after having given to this petition the most respectful consideration, they are yet unable to ascertain the species of relief desired by the petitioners, nor can they, in the absence of explicit declarations of their wishes, suggest any measures which promise to produce the desired effect as speedily as it is wished. The petitioners seem to labour under a sense of undefined injury, of the origin, nature, and extent of which, they speak with but little precision, and from which they seek relief by a general prayer, that the legislature will do all acts whatsoever which may be deemed efficacious in restoring the citizens of the state to the same happy and prosperous condition in which they were found a few years since. If through the indefinite expressions of the petition, any specific wishes or views are disclosed, they have reference, as it would seem, to restorative powers which reside with the National Legislature alone.

Great respect is undoubtedly due to calls for aid or relief preferred by every class of citizens, but more especially to those of the agricultural portion of the community. Yet in this instance, as in many others, there is reason to fear that the proper apprehension of the consequences of untried, and even dangerous measures, is swallowed up in the sense of existing grievances; and that a desire to get rid of the present, drowns all fears as to the future. It seems, however, to be the wiser doctrine, that we should rather bear the ills we know, if not altogether intolerable, than fly to those we know not of. There is scarcely any plan or system of relief, which legislative wisdom can devise, which may not have the tendency to plunge us deeper in misfortune and despondency, whilst its probable operation in exalting us to a state of individual and national prosperity, is just as questionable as that of the system under which we now live. Every thing may be lost, but little can be gained, by the proposed change. That the present is a day of bitter things to the people of this state; that the energies of the state, and of its citizens, are in some degree paralysed; that the operations of public and private industry are in some degree retarded, and the ordinary vents of commerce in some degree closed, cannot be denied—Yet it is denied that the present state of things is a hopeless state; yet it is contended that it contains within itself the seeds of its own reformation.

Your committee cannot but regard the dark picture of individual distress, which stands in such high relief upon the face of the petition, as drawn with that license common to painters and poets, which permits the use of high colouring for the sake of effect. The present condition of our country should furnish no matter for surprise, when we advert to the fact, that the whole community has for years past been sustained in a state of unnatural and unhealthy excitement, by the application of inordinate stimulants, which whilst they influenced the body politic, upheld it in a bloated and diseased state, which might at first view have been mistaken for a state of health, but which, when more closely approached, was found to be the work of decay. These stimulants have been removed, and the necessary consequence has been, the prostration of all the various interests of the state. The application of them is again called for, and your committee have refused to apply them, because they are satisfied, that any degree of vigor and energy which they might inspire, would but create a forced state of existence of momentary duration, from which your citizens would sink back after the failure of the forcing power, which could not long have efficacy, into a state of yet more deplorable despondency and prostration, than that in which they were originally found. The existing state of the people seems to contain both the bane and the antidote; there is what we may term, a recuperative energy in this country, which cannot fail to bring it back in a natural and easy manner, to the same elevated ground which it once occupied. The present slumber of public and private activity, is but the natural result of a long continued state of over excitement; and there is reason to hope, that it is a slumber, during which the healthy state of the system will be restored, the spirits refreshed, and the muscles prepared for new exertion. The interests of our citizens demand that we should not rouse them too rudely from this slumber. They point us to the undoubted fact, that every act of legislative interference, for the purpose of furnishing relief from pecuniary distresses, since the year 1814, has but had the effect of plunging us more deeply into them. Your people can only desire, that they may be suffered to work out their own salvation, by the lights of the past, and that no political quackery may be suffered to approach them with its legislative panaceas, which "when asked for bread, can but give them a stone." The narrow limits of a report will not permit us to say more on this subject.

In conclusion, as we know "no more efficient and practicable plan of relieving the pecuniary distresses of the people of this state, and of ameliorating the various interests of the state," &c. &c. we beg leave to recommend, not only to the petitioners, but also to the citizens of the state generally, the constant and energetic observance of the four cardinal virtues, JUSTICE, TEMPERANCE, PRUDENCE and FORTITUDE, as admirably calculated to relieve from present, and to guard against the existence of future calamities, of a like nature.

Which was read.

Mr. Steele obtained leave to bring in a bill, entitled, A further additional supplement to an act, entitled, An act for the recovery of small debts out of court, and to repeal the acts of assembly therein mentioned. Ordered, That Messrs. Steele, Worthington and Eccleston, report the same.

Mr. Worthington obtained leave to bring in a bill, entitled, A supplement to an act, entitled, An act to establish state warehouses for the inspection of tobacco in the city of Baltimore. Ordered, That Messrs. Worthington, Howard and Shower, report the same.

Mr. Millard presents a petition from Elizabeth Fanning, for support for herself and daughter; referred to the committee on petitions of a similar nature.