

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON THE

Celebration of the centennial birthday of George Washington.

FEBRUARY 13, 1832.

Read, and resolution adopted by the Senate ordered to be printed.

The Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives, appointed to make arrangements for the purpose of celebrating the centennial birthday of George Washington, have, according to order, had the subject under consideration, and now beg leave to report to the respective Houses:

1. That the committee have directed their chairman to propose, at a proper time, by a joint resolution, an adjournment of the two Houses from the 21st to the 23d of the current month, out of respect to the memory of George Washington, and in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of his birthday.

2. The committee were desirous that the day should be celebrated by an oration suitable to the occasion. The distinguished citizen who presides in the Supreme Court of the United States appeared to the committee to be eminently qualified to pronounce such an oration, and to be peculiarly adapted to the service, from his known friendship and intimacy with George Washington. Accordingly, a letter was addressed, by the direction of the committee, to the Chief Justice, requesting him to assist in the ceremonies of the day, by delivering an appropriate oration: to that letter he returned an answer. From this correspondence, (which accompanies the report,) it will be seen that the Chief Justice, for reasons assigned by him, declined the task.

3. The committee directed their chairman to request the chaplains of the two Houses of Congress to perform divine service in the Capitol on the 22d instant. The application has been made, and the chaplains have accordingly engaged to comply with the request.

4th, and lastly. The committee resolved to recommend to Congress to adopt the necessary measures to carry into effect the resolution which was passed by Congress on the 24th day of December, 1779, for the removal of the body of George Washington, and its interment in the Capitol, at the city of Washington, and that the ceremony be performed on the 22d instant.

In pursuance of this recommendation of the committee, the chairman will respectively submit to the two Houses of Congress a resolution to carry it into effect.

All which is respectfully reported.

H. CLAY,

Chairman of the committee of the Senate.

PHIL'N THOMAS,

Chairman of the committee of the House of Representatives.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, be hereby authorized to make application to John A. Washington, of Mount Vernon, for the body of George Washington, to be removed and deposited in the Capitol, at Washington city, in conformity with the resolution of Congress of the 24th December, 1799; and that, if they obtain the requisite consent to the removal thereof, they be further authorized to cause it to be removed, and deposited in the Capitol on the 22d day of February, 1832.

Resolved, That the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, be also authorized to prescribe the order of such ceremonies as they may deem suitable to the occasion of the interment of the body of George Washington in the Capitol, on the day above mentioned; and that the two Houses of Congress will attend and assist in the performance of those ceremonies.

WASHINGTON, February 9, 1832.

SIR: The Senate and House of Representatives of the United States having appointed a joint committee, "for the purpose of making arrangements for the celebration of the centennial birthday of George Washington, the undersigned, chairmen of the committees of the two Houses, have been directed by the committees to request that you will, on the 22d instant, deliver an oration in commemoration of that great event.

The considerations which have prompted the committees to direct their attention to you, sir, thus to assist in honoring the memory of the father of his country, are obvious, and peculiarly appropriate; and the undersigned unite, to the general wish, an expression of theirs, that it may be agreeable to you to comply with the request which they now have the honor to communicate.

We have the honor to be,

With great respect,

Your obedient servants,

H. CLAY,

Chairman of the committee of the Senate.

PHIL'N THOMAS,

Chairman of the committee of the House of Representatives.

The Hon. JOHN MARSHALL,

Chief Justice of the United States.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 1832.

GENTLEMEN: I have received your letter, expressing your wish, and that of the joint committee of the Senate and House of Representatives, that I would, on the 22d instant, the centennial birthday of George Washington, deliver an oration in commemoration of that great event.

I will not attempt to describe the impressions made on me by this flattering request, and the favorable opinion it implies. The addition of my exertions, feeble as they might be, to those of Congress, "in honoring the memory of the father of his country," of the man whom language cannot exalt, would be an act on which I should long reflect with just pride. Could I undertake to deliver a public address on any subject, all my feelings would impel me to comply with a request which does me so much honor, and is so grateful to my heart; but, in addition to the pressure of official duties which occupy me entirely, and render it impracticable for me to devote so much time to the subject as its intrinsic importance, and great interest in the estimation of all, would require, I am physically unable to perform the task I should assume. My voice has become so weak as to be almost inaudible, even in a room not unusually large. In the open air it could not be heard by those nearest me. I must, therefore, decline the honor proposed.

My profound acknowledgments are due to you, gentlemen, and to the joint committee, for the selection you have made of the person to perform this interesting service; and I pray you to receive my warm and sincere thanks for the flattering, may I add friendly, terms in which that selection is communicated.

With very great respect,

I have the honor to be, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. MARSHALL.

The Hon. HENRY CLAY, and

The Hon. PHILEMON THOMAS.

