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Dade Institute

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DADE INSTITUTE.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 89.]

MARCH 5, 1840.

Mr. CORWIN, from the Committee on the Public Lands, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom were referred the memorial and petitions praying Congress to grant a township of land for the endowment of a seminary of learning in Florida, to be called the "Dade Institute," report :

That the measure proposed has attracted to it a deep and pervading interest in almost all parts of the Union. The Legislative Assembly of Florida, at several successive sessions; the convention lately assembled to form a constitution of government for the State to be formed out of that Territory; and the people of the Territory, individually, in great numbers, have all strongly urged upon Congress the propriety of the proposed grant. The Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia militia, and the officers of the regular army, who have been in service during the present war with the Seminole Indians, all of whom have to mourn the loss of valued friends who have perished in that conflict, have united in cordial recommendations to the same effect. Several cities, in their corporate character, who have been led to sympathize with the distressed condition of Florida, by the loss of their sons in the late destructive campaigns in that country, have sent to us memorials on the same subject; as have also many of the most respectable colleges in the United States added their earnest recommendations of the foregoing memorials and petitions.

The Territory of Florida, it is well known, has been, for several years, the theatre of a war with savages, who unite secret murder and midnight assassination with all other means of destruction. Many parts of that Territory have been made desolate, which, prior to the war, had fair to augment rapidly its wealth and population. Numerous families have been thrown upon the world for support and education, who, but for the disasters which befell them in that war, would have had parents and friends to direct, and ample means to accomplish their education. The gallant militia of the neighboring States, who, from time to time, have been called into that service, have also felt, to some extent, the influence of the same calamity.

From the foregoing considerations, it will appear that the object of the proposed grant enlists feelings, and is seconded by interests pervading portions of the Union too numerous and too widely extended to be subject to

sectional objections, even if such objections could, under other circumstances, exert a legitimate influence upon the subject.

It has been the uniform practice of Congress to grant to each of the new Territories or States two townships of land, for the purposes of education. This usual grant has been made to the Territory of Florida. The object of this enlightened and beneficent policy, which has been attended with the most beneficial results in the new States, is to give to each an equal amount in value, as nearly as possible. The direct advantage of this policy to the Government is found in the enhanced prices and increased sales of the public domain, and the rapid settlement of the frontier portions of the country. It must be obvious that, these grants being of entire townships in a body, their values would not be equal, but would vary according to the peculiarities of the country in which they were located. The committee are informed, from the best authority, that, owing to the peculiarities of the Florida Territory, no township of land can be located there, which would equal in value the same quantity happily located in either of the States or Territories of the northwest. Assuming this to be true, it would be but a dictate of common justice to grant an additional township of land to Florida, and thus put her, in this respect, on a footing of equality with the other new States and Territories of the Union.

In recommending the proposed grant, the committee are not unmindful of the influence which the historical recollections that cluster around the Dade Institute may exert upon the minds of those who are to be its future beneficiaries. The remains of the gallant officer and his brave associates, who give name to the seminary which this grant is to endow, will be collected and interred within its grounds. The melancholy fate of these brave men, if it do not swell the young minds who will have it constantly before them, with the proud feelings that accompany the recollection of victorious war, will, nevertheless, teach a glorious lesson of lofty patriotism and self-devoted courage. Whilst the committee can find reasons for the grant, which, under any circumstances, warrant it, they can see in the peculiar history which belongs to it traits which cannot fail, in time, to produce the happiest consequences.

The Legislature of Florida has already incorporated the "Dade Institute;" but, as the committee do not choose to recommend that the grant should vest in that corporation, they have framed a bill, to accompany this report, vesting the land in the Territory, whilst it remains such, and in the State afterward, which may be formed out of it.

At the last session of the last Congress this subject was referred to a committee, that made a favorable report, which this committee adopt as a part of this.

MARCH 2, 1839.

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom were referred the memorial of John A. L. Norman, of Florida, and the resolutions of the Legislative Council of Florida thereon ; as also the petition of the people of Florida in favor thereof ; as also the petition of the delegates assembled for the purpose of framing a State constitution for Florida ; as well as a memorial from the officers of the Tennessee brigade, in the service of the United States, in Florida ; as well as from the officers of the Georgia brigade, in said service ; as well as from the officers of the Alabama volunteers, in said service ; as also of the members of the Louisiana Legislature to the Louisiana delegation in Congress ; as well as many letters from the relatives of the brave dead, and from highly respectable citizens of the United States ; as well as from several Governors of their respective States —report :

That the sundry memorials and petitions presented to your committee set forth, that the many highly-respected sons of the several States, who have gallantly lost their lives in their country's service, in Florida, and now lie unhonored and to be forgotten in her wilds, be gathered in one common grave, and that a proper tomb be placed over them, to mark the spot where they fell ; which tomb shall be an incentive to the youth of the republic, inducing them to imitate the glorious example of the dead, and their patriotic devotedness ; and to be, like them, ever ready to obey the calls of their country, even unto death.

Your committee beg leave further to report, that the Legislative Council of Florida has incorporated the Dade Institute ; and all the necessary preliminary steps have been taken which, as a Territory, she is empowered and permitted to take.

She has appointed a large and highly respectable body of trustees, citizens of the Territory and of the several States, (the generals of the regular army, and the generals of the volunteers of the several States, who have served in Florida, being trustees,) to carry out this highly useful and philanthropic effort. And her Legislative Council, by their act, have also declared that they will sustain this measure, by erecting an institution of learning to the memory of the dead around said tomb ; believing that education in a republic is altogether essential, and that the combining of education with the honoring of the dead will give an impulse to and increase education among all classes.

The memorialists state, that this is therefore prayed, not only for the properly honoring of the brave dead, but also for the universally educating of the rising generation in Florida.

The prayer of the said memorialists further urges that this effort of educating the living by honoring the dead has been for three successive years warmly espoused by the Legislative Council of Florida, in their endeavor to found the Dade Institute of Florida, whereby the whole yeomanry of the country might be educated ; but that, as yet, this desirable object has been prevented by the insurrection of the Seminole Indians, and which insurrection yet causes delay.

To accomplish this useful and interesting object, the memorialists pray a grant of a township of land, to enable the trustees of the Dade Institute to erect said tomb over the brave dead, in the land where they fought, on the

spot where they fell ; and, also, for the purpose of erecting an institution of learning thereon.

Your committee therefore respectfully recommend that the prayer of the petitioners, for a grant of a township of land to the trustees of the Dade Institute of Florida, be allowed for the purposes aforesaid.