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Irwinton Academy, Alabama

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IRWINTON ACADEMY, ALABAMA.

APRIL 4, 1840.

Laid on the table.

Mr. THOMPSON, of Mississippi, from the Committee on the Public Lands, made the following

REPORT :

The Committee on the Public Lands, to whom was referred the memorial of the trustees of the Irwinton Academy in the State of Alabama, have had the same under consideration and instruct me to report :

The memorialists after expressing a proper sense of the great importance of education in a political and social point of view, represent that they procured from the Legislature of the State of Alabama, an act of incorporation for an academical institute in the town of Irwinton ; that at a heavy expense they have erected suitable buildings, and have paid for them in part by a liberal contribution of their limited means, but that they are unable to pay the debts contracted or complete the buildings, and therefore pray Congress for relief, by granting to them some portion of the public lands in their vicinity for academical purposes. They then urge upon Congress the enhanced value given to the public lands in their vicinity by such a grant ; the embarrassments and sufferings they have endured by the late Creek war, by which their expectations in their ordinary pursuits have been disappointed, and their abilities rendered unequal to their engagements ; also, the eligibility of the town of Irwinton, for a seat of learning for the surrounding country.

In our Government, resting as it does on the affections, intelligence, and virtue, of the people, education becomes a subject of the first magnitude. Your committee feel and duly appreciate its vast importance. But our predecessors have not been unmindful of its advantages ; nor have they failed to make liberal provisions for its support and advancement. In the act for the admission of the State of Alabama into the union, it is expressly stipulated that the sixteenth section in every township then undisposed of within the limits of the State, shall be reserved to the inhabitants of each respective township, for the use of schools ; and seventy-two sections of land are set apart for the use of Alabama, in the establishment of a seminary of learning. And the question here recurs, Is this provision inadequate, and shall we supply the deficiency ? Without expressly deciding this question, the opinion is entertained, that if grants of land were made to separate institutions for their own uses, independent of the supervising control of the Legislature of the State, a precedent would be established which would lead to incalculable mischiefs.

Your committee, therefore, zealous as they are in the cause of education, sympathizing with the trustees of the academy for the losses they have sustained by the incursion of a ruthless savage foe, and regretting deeply and sincerely their embarrassments in carrying out their useful and patriotic enterprise, feel constrained to say, that, in their opinion, the prayer of the memorial should not be granted.

APRIL 4, 1810.

Wm. A. R. [Signature]

Mr. THOMSON of Mississippi, from the Committee on the Public Lands, made the following

REPORT:

The Committee on the Public Lands is in honor to refer the memorial of the trustees of the Franklin Academy in the State of Mississippi, and has the same under consideration and directed me to report.

The memorialists also express a proper sense of the great importance of education in a political and social point of view, represent that they are cured from the Legislature of the State of Alabama, an act of incorporation for an academy in the town of Franklin; that at a heavy expense they have erected suitable buildings, and have paid for them in part by a liberal contribution of their private means; but that they are unable to pay the debts contracted to complete the buildings, and therefore pray Congress for relief by granting to them some portion of the public lands in their vicinity for the educational purpose. They also urge upon Congress the enormous value given to the public lands in their vicinity by such a grant: the settlements and settlements they have settled by the late Creek war by which their expectations in their ordinary pursuits have been disappointed, and their abilities rendered unequal to their engagements; also the difficulty of the State to raise a fund of land for the surrounding country.

In our Government, being as it does on the American continent, and in view of the people education being a subject of the first importance. Your committee feel and duly recognize its great importance. But our resources have not been sufficient of the amount; nor have they failed to make liberal provisions for its support and advancement. In the act for the admission of the State of Alabama into the Union, it is expressly stipulated that the territory sectionally every township that had been within the limits of the State, shall be reserved to the inhabitants of each respective township for the use of schools; and an explicit section of land was set apart for the use of Alabama, in the establishment of a seminary of learning. And the question here recurs, in this provision inadequate, and shall we apply the doctrine without expressly deciding this question, the question is essential, that if grants of land were made to separate institutions for their own use, independent of the supervising control of the Legislature of the State, a precedent would be established which would lead to incalculable mischief.

Wm. A. R. [Signature]