

PRESENTMENTS

Of the Grand Jury of Jackson county, August Term of the Superior Court, 1831.

THE Grand Jury have gone through with the business of the present term of the Court, and believing it to be their right, and feeling it to be their duty to express their sentiments on matters of public interest, would respectfully present as a public grievance of great magnitude, the great number of members in our Legislature. An old maxim says, that the "world is governed too much." This may be applied in some measure to our country, where we have not only too great a multiplicity of laws, but too many rulers, and too overgrown a body of law makers. The inequality too of the representation from the different counties is oppressive, and anti-republican, for it strikes at the very root of the first and most wholesome of republican maxims, that the majority shall govern. There can be no plainer proof of this than the fact, that although a large majority of the voters in the State at the last general election, declared it to be their will and wish, that a reduction of the number of members in the Legislature should be effected; yet their will was disrespected, and their wishes slighted. The majority of the people was even offended and insulted by their disobedient servants who refused to leave it to the people to say whether they would assemble in convention, and do that which they had dared to refuse to do themselves. A convention is the people assembled in their majesty; if there is danger in a convention, there is danger in the people. The Legislature is the instrument of the people to do their will, and thus promote the public good; yet after the will of the people had been told from the ballot box, after their instructions had been given to the Legislature in language which could not be mistaken, this Legislature disdained that will, and disobeyed those instructions. The Legislature has the power to alter the constitution. A bill was introduced into it for that purpose, and thereby to lessen the representation, but it was rejected. Another bill was introduced to leave it to the people to say whether they would call a convention to effect that object, and even that was rejected. Thus refusing to do what the people desired, and even refusing to allow the people the privilege of saying whether they would do it themselves. It is anti-democratic to refuse to leave any measure of importance to the voice of the people, because the people are the sovereign power. It is indeed setting the "servants above their masters." This Grand Jury cannot in conclusion express their disapprobation of the conduct of the last legislature on this subject, better than by adopting the language of the Grand Jury at the last term of this Court wherein they say, "we do believe that those of our members who refused at the last session of the Legislature to submit the question of convention or no convention to the people, were wanting in respect to the will of a majority of their constituents."

We concur in a presentment of the Grand Jury of Clark county, made at their last term, relative to unwarrantable oppression exercised by cotton buyers in the City of Augusta towards the back country planters.

We sincerely hope that our next Legislature will repeal that section of the Land Bill which prohibits the Gold Diggers from a participation in the contemplated land lottery, as we conceive it to be unconstitutional.

We request that these our presentments be published in the Athenian.

We approve the conduct of his honor Judge Clayton, for his unremitting attention to business during the present term, and also to Mr. Solicitor Tippe for his prompt and accommodating attention to his duties, and our calls:

Robert Venable, Foreman.

William Cowan,

James Hargrove,

A. J. Brown,

John T. Story,

James Hampton,

Samuel Barnett,

James Langston,

James Appleby,

Peter E. McMullen,

Robert B. Hampton,

Fouch Haggard,

D. M. Burns,

Thomas J. Bowen,

Peter A. Maddux,

John G. Pittman,

N. C. Jarrett,

Wm. McMullen,

Joseph Hampton,

William Legg.

I dissent from my fellows in that part of our presentments which says "the members of our last Legislature who voted against convention, voted against the will of their constituents."

PETER E. McMULLEN.

On motion of the Solicitor General, it is ordered that the foregoing presentments be published agreeably to the request of the Grand Jury.

A true extract from the minutes.

EDWARD ADAMS, Clk.