

The grand committee, consisting of [blank] to whom was referred a motion of Mr. Monroe

The grand Committee, consisting of to whom was referred a Motion of Mr. Monroe, for repealing those Acts of Congress which recommended to the States this circumstanced, the **CESSION** of **VACANT** and **UNAPPROPRIATED TERRITORY**, to the United States, so far as they respect the Jurisdiction of the same,

Beg Leave to **REPORT**,—

THAT by the resolution of the 6th of September, 1780, they find it was recommended to all the sates having claims to vacant and unappropriated territory, to cede the same to the United States, for their common benefit.

That on the 10th of October, 1780, it was resolved that the territory thus ceded should be formed into states, and admitted into the confederacy, with the same rights as the thirteen original states.

That previous to the said recommendation, New-York had, and in consequence of it, Virginia and Massachusetts have made such cessions as aforesaid.

That by such cessions, all the territory lying between a meridian line to be drawn twenty miles westward of the most westerly bent of the river or strait of Niagara, the western boundary of the state of Pennsylvania, the rivers Ohio, the Mississippi and the lakes, is subject to division, and entitled to admission into the confederacy upon the principles aforesaid:

That further cessions of jurisdiction will add of course, in the degree, to the extent of territory thus circumstanced, and proportionably contract and limit that of the thirteen old states. How far this principle extended further, will be of advantage to the confederacy,

Library of Congress

should, in the opinion of the committee, be well understood before it is admitted. It is therefore necessary to enquire what the objects are that are sought to be obtained by such cessions.

Heretofore they appear to have been two—1st. the diminution of the larger states in their power and resources, by lessening the extent of their territory—2d. the possession of the right of soil for the purpose of a revenue. But when it is considered that the limits which these cessions have given to such states, have contracted them to an equality with the other members of the union, it is supposed that this object, if it ever had any foundation for it, is already fully obtained; and for the purpose of a revenue, the committee apprehend that a cession of soil, independent of that of jurisdiction, will be equally advantageous to the United States; the circumstances which would apply to the settlers on the territory ceded westward of the Ohio, in their distance from the states to which it belonged, cannot, to those eastward of it; and the soil, it is presumed, under the government of one of the old states, whose laws, constitution and rights in the confederacy, are already established and known, will be as valuable, and sell as high, as it would under a new state. The committee are therefore of opinion, that further cessions of jurisdiction, even upon the principles which have heretofore influenced the United States, are unnecessary.

Other considerations occur which strongly urge the propriety of preventing further cessions of jurisdiction. The committee hold this proposition to be invariably true, that unanimity in council depends on a similarity of interest on the states which compose it; they hold it also equally true in the reverse, that a contrariety of interests, creates division in council. It should therefore form a principal object with the United States to make, so far as it depends on them, such division of the territory within their bounds, as shall create and preserve this similarity of interest in every state. A similarity of interests in states, depends on a similarity in their circumstances, in their respective resources, their commercial and political relation to other powers. The committee consider it as unnecessary to examine these principles of relation in their application to all the territory within the government of the United States; but from an attentive view of those parts which bound upon the atlantic

Library of Congress

ocean, and those which bound and depend upon the western waters, separated by a [??] ridge of mountains, which traverse from south to north these states, they are led to believe, from pursuing them in their different directions, that in some respects a different kind of arrangement and accommodation will be necessary to promote those interests which particularly belong to each. If therefore the United States should admit a separation of said territory, so as to commit that lying on each side to a separate line of sates, they are of opinion it would create such a diversity of interests as would exceedingly embarrass the federal councils, and impede and obstruct all their operations.

If them the seperation above suggested, will create this diversity of interest, it necessarily follows, that the preservation of the states in the jurisdiction they now hold, will prevent it; and this in the opinion of the committee, will be the case. The concern which many of the old states now have in the western country, in the extent of territory within their respective jurisdictions depending on the western waters, in common with those which shall be erected beyond the Ohio, forms in their opinion, that similarity in their circumstances, necessary to bind the several parts of the confederacy together by the same tie of one common interest: The United States should therefore consider it as a fortunate circumstance that such states hold these bounds, and should in no event suffer them to be contracted or diminished.

In addition to this it is to be observed, that in proportion to the number of inhabitants that such cessions take from the old states, will their apportionments in future requisitions be diminished; and that the new states, until they acquire a certain degree of strength, instead of being able to contribute to its support, will require the aid and assistance of the federal government. Why the United States should thus invert and contravene the principles upon which they confederated, the committee cannot conceive.

Upon a thorough consideration therefore of the motion referred to them, the committee submit the following resolution.

Library of Congress

Resolved, That the resolutions of the 6th September, and 10th October, 1780, recommending it to the states holding vacant and unappropriated territory, to make liberal surrenders thereof to the United States, for their common benefit, so far as they respect the jurisdiction of the same, be repealed; and that it be recommended to the states thus circumstanced, to make liberal surrenders as aforesaid, of soil only, retaining to themselves the right of jurisdiction.