

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 214.

[2d Session.

## SLAVE TRADE.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 15, 1807.

DECEMBER 25, 1806.

*Resolved, by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That our Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States be requested to use their exertions to procure the passage of a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into the United States, or of any of the Territories thereof, so soon as the constitution will admit of the same.*

*Resolved, That the Governor be, and is hereby, requested to transmit copies of the foregoing resolution to our Senators and Representatives in Congress.*

ABRAHAM SHEPHERD, *Speaker of the House of Reps.*  
THOMAS KIRKER, *Speaker of the Senate.*

SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE, CHILICOTHE, OHIO.

I do certify that the foregoing is a correct copy of the original roll in my office.

WM. CREIGHTON, JUN., *Secretary of State.*

9th CONGRESS.]

No. 215.

[2d Session.

## COLONIZATION OF PEOPLE OF COLOR FROM VIRGINIA.

COMMUNICATED TO THE SENATE, JANUARY 16, 1807.

IN THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, December 31, 1800.

*Resolved, That the Governor be requested to correspond with the President of the United States on the subject of purchasing lands without the limits of this State, whither persons obnoxious to the laws or dangerous to the peace of society may be removed.*

A copy from the journal of the House of Delegates.

WM. WIRT, *Clk. Ho. Del.*

SIR:

RICHMOND, June 15, 1801.

I enclose you a resolution of the General Assembly of this commonwealth, of the last session, by which it is made my duty to correspond with you on the subject of obtaining, by purchase, lands without the limits of this State, to which persons obnoxious to the laws or dangerous to the peace of society may be removed. This resolution was produced by the conspiracy of the slaves which took place in this city and neighborhood last year, and is applicable to that description of persons only. The idea of such an acquisition was suggested by motives of humanity, it being intended by means thereof to provide an alternate mode of punishment for those described by the resolution who, under the existing laws, might be doomed to suffer death. It was deemed more humane, and it is hoped would be found in practice not less expedient, to transport such offenders beyond the limits of the State.

It seems to be the more obvious intention of the Legislature, as inferred from the resolution, to make the proposed acquisition of land in the vacant western territory of the United States, but it does not appear to me to preclude one without the limits of the Union. If a friendly Power would designate a tract of country within its jurisdiction, either on this continent or on a neighboring island, to which we might send such persons, it is not improbable the Legislature might prefer it. In any event, an alternative could not otherwise than be desirable, since, after maturely weighing the conditions and advantages of each position, the Legislature might still prefer that which appeared to it most eligible.

It is proper to remark, that the latter part of the resolution, which proposes the removal of such persons as are dangerous to the peace of society, may be understood as comprising many to whom the preceding member does not apply. Whether the Legislature intended to give it a more extensive import, or rather whether it contemplated removing from the country any but culprits who were condemned to suffer death, I will not undertake to decide. But if the more enlarged construction of the resolution is deemed the true one, it furnishes, in my opinion, a strong additional motive why the Legislature, in disposing of this great concern, should command an alternative of places.

As soon as the mind emerges, in contemplating the subject, beyond the contracted scale of providing a mode of punishment for offenders, vast and interesting objects present themselves to view. It is impossible not to revolve in it the condition of those people, the embarrassment they have already occasioned us, and are still likely to subject us to. We perceive an existing evil, which commenced under our colonial system, with which we are not properly chargeable, or, if at all, not in the present degree; and we acknowledge the extreme difficulty of remedying it. At this point the mind rests with suspense, and surveys with anxiety obstacles which become more serious as we approach them. It is in vain for the Legislature to deliberate on the subject in the extent which it is capable of, with a view to adopt the system of policy which appears to it most wise and just, if it have not the means of executing it. To lead to a sound decision, and make the result a happy one, it is necessary that the field of practicable expedients be opened to its election on the widest possible scale.

Under this view of the subject, I shall be happy to be advised by you whether a tract of land in the western territory of the United States can be procured for this purpose, in what quarter, and on what terms; and also