

Mr. Boudinot thought the number too large. Persons, he observed, who wished to purchase so large a tract, could afford, and would have no objection to come to the seat of government to make the purchase.

Mr. Sedgwick observed that it would be a great advantage to have the contract for large purchases made under the immediate eye of government. The house, however, he thought was not prepared to fill up the blank; he wished it left open.

The motions for filling the blanks were withdrawn.

Mr. Boudinot proposed that all smaller quantities be sold at the subordinate offices—To prevent the confusion that selling the same quantity at the different offices might occasion.—Agreed.

Mr. Smith (S. C.) wished it determined under whose direction these offices should be; whether of one or three commissioners, or of any officer already appointed. He thought one officer would be most eligible; there would be more responsibility, and uniformity.

Mr. Sherman wished the determination of this particular delayed. His mind was not made up.—The motion was delayed.

Mr. Boudinot proposed that no lands should be sold previous to settling the Indian claims.—Agreed.

That part of the report was read, which sets apart certain lots, for certain particular purposes and directs the manner of locating them.

Mr. Scott moved as a substitute his second proposition, that such districts as shall be set apart for sale shall include the actual settlements, and be left to be indiscriminately located. He said it was improper to set aside different tracts for different modes of location, some in large tracts, others in small lots; he conceived it would be the interest of government to let every one purchase where he pleased and as much or as little as he chose. From experience he knew that those parts were always settled with the most celerity that were not bound down to any of those restrictions. For his part he could see no good argument in favour of them; he wished some of the gentlemen who approved of this mode, to give him some reasons for preferring it. There could be no fear, he observed, of individual settlers scattering and losing themselves in the back woods; there was a sufficient check to prevent it—the Indians would keep them compact, much more effectually than any regulation Congress could make. If after granting certain scattered tracts to individual settlers, a considerable tract including these was wanted, he could see no inconvenience in granting it, reserving to the former settlers their rights.

Mr. Williamson rose to give the gentleman last up one reason for opposing indiscriminate location. Hitherto he owned much mischief had not arisen from this mode of settlement; but now there were persons rich in securities and cash, ready to take up considerable quantities of land; which if they were permitted to select here and there, pick and chuse every choice tract, they could, if indiscriminate location was the established principle, take up all the good lands, and leave for future settlers, those who might not have the same means of purchasing immediately at command, the indifferent parcels. Many he knew had it in contemplation to do this if the opportunity offered. He instanced North-Carolina, as an example of the injurious tendency of this liberty; where many tracts are unsaleable, owing to this circumstance. If these tracts were to be purchased by actual settlers, the case would be different; but they would only be taken up by persons under the name of actual settlers. Such a practice would be an impediment to such companies of Europeans as might wish to settle among us.

Mr. Scott said he expected the gentleman would have offered more solid objections to his plan, and more forcible arguments in favor of the other. Though the first settlers had the choice of the land; yet he conceived the remaining part would acquire a considerable additional value from the surrounding settlements. As for the European companies who might be tempted to settle among us, he did not contemplate it as an object so desirable. A body of French people settling in that way would, he said, preserve their language and manners 2000 years perhaps; this would not be for the true interest of the country, all its inhabitants should by mutual intercourse become assimilated and no name be known but that of Americans.

Mr. Boudinot was against indiscriminate location: He said, he had seen the bad effects of it in the State from which he came. Persons had bought up the lowlands, and sold them again to such as absolutely needed a water lot to their farm, at enormous prices. He mentioned another objection to the plan—the tendency it had to create law-suits. He said he was certain more money had been spent at law in disputes arising from that mode of settlement in New-Jersey, than would have been necessary to purchase the land in the whole State. The late Congress, he informed, had adopted a method to obviate

the inconveniences of the former mode—the lands were laid out into mile-squares, these divided into four equal squares, and in that form sold.

Mr. White proposed that such as shall not improve their purchases within a fixed reasonable time, should forfeit the same.

Mr. Boudinot wished it left to a committee to determine. He had no objection to leave the power with the commissioners.

Mr. Scott approved of the idea thrown out by Mr. White, and agreed to amend the proposition in conformity with the opinions of Messrs Boudinot and White.

Mr. Boudinot conceived it would be very difficult to determine what an actual settler was. A purchaser could go and spend a few days on his land, and call himself an actual settler.

Mr. White proposed that a man holding only a certain proportion of uncultivated land to the improved, should be called an actual settler.

Mr. Sedgwick disliked indiscriminate location. He was confident if the districts so to be settled were extensive, there would be too great room for speculation and monopoly.

Mr. Scott said there were tracts of land which it is impossible to sell even by offering good parcels with them. Between Philadelphia and his home there were, he said, spots, that were only intended by nature for the birds and beasts—that could be of no value for cultivation. He could not see, he said, much probability, that the best land would be picked out—the difficulty of exploring a wild and uncultivated desert, opposed a considerable barrier to such attempts.

Mr. Scott's amendment was lost.

Mr. Fitzsimons moved to strike out from the clause the limitation of 100 acres to each settler.

Mr. Scott disliked the limitation, he wished it amended so as to leave it to Congress to fix the limitation by act.—Agreed.

To the next paragraph in the following words. "The other tracts shall from time to time be set apart for sales in townships of ten miles square, except where they shall adjoin upon a boundary of some prior grant, or of a tract so set apart; in which cases there shall be no greater departure from such form of location, than may be absolutely necessary."

Mr. Scott moved an amendment that the seven ranges which in laying off Congress had already gone to a considerable expence, be fixed on for sale, instead of the tracts proposed to be set apart by that article.

Mr. Sherman was against the motion; he said it would be confining the settlers to too narrow bounds in making their choice.

Mr. Clymer wished to know how much land these seven ranges included.

Mr. Scott said, he could not give the exact information.

The committee rose, and reported progress—*Adjourned.*

TUESDAY, Dec. 28.

In committee of the whole house on the state of the Union. Mr. Boudinot in the chair.

The report of the Secretary of the Treasury, on the subjects of a land office and the unappropriated lands in the Western Territory, under consideration.

Mr. Scott said he was ready to give some information relative to the extent of the seven ranges: He produced a map of them, from which it appeared that they included 35 lots, each 6 miles square. The tract in the shape of a triangle, of which one leg measured about 60, and the other 42—in all about 1200 square miles.—His amendment was agreed to.

The next article was agreed to with a trifling amendment—without debate.

Then the following was read: "That the price shall be thirty cents pr. acre, to be paid either in gold or silver, or public securities, computing those which shall bear an immediate interest of six per cent. as at par with gold and silver, and those which shall bear a future or less interest, if any there be, at a proportional value."

Mr. Scott moved that 30 cents should be struck out.

Mr. Sherman was in favor of inserting 50 cents pr. acre. He said there was every reasonable probability that the lands would be worth that sum in a few years.

Mr. Lawrence said that as the quality of the land would vary, it appeared proper to fix on two prices, at which they should be sold, viz. That the price shall not be more than nor less than . . . He submitted the idea to the consideration of the committee.

Mr. Sedgwick preferred the insertion of a sum below which the lands should not be sold.

Mr. Williamson suggested the propriety of making a difference in the price to those who purchase large quantities, from the price to those who purchase small quantities.

The motion for striking out was lost.

Mr. Sedgwick then moved to amend the clause by inserting "that the price per acre shall not be less than" 30 cents pr. acre.

Mr. Stone objected to the motion. He said the operation of it would be, to leave it discretionary with the surveyors to fix the price of the various tracts: This would be to constitute a tribunal, in a measure independent of the government. He thought the policy of the government should be, to fix on a price, which shall be so reasonable, that persons may feel every inducement to pay it before they take up the lands—for it has been found by experience, said he, that when once a tract of distant country is taken possession of, you never can get any thing more than the settlers are willing to pay. He insisted that it was impracticable to fix the relative value of unlocated lands—it had been repeatedly tried without effect. He asked if any of the States had ever established various rates for their lands? He knew of none.

Mr. Sedgwick answered the enquiry respecting the relative value of lands being ascertained in the several States: He said that so far as his information extended, which respected only the States of New-York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, this had invariably been the case: Every man knows there is a most essential difference in the value of lands: Those on navigable rivers may be ten times as valuable as those on the top of a mountain—this every individual is so sensible of, that a difference in the price is constantly made—and why the government should not make a difference, it is impossible to say; any man, by casting his eye on a map, can at once determine that some part of the land is unspeakably more valuable than other parts. He was certain that vesting a discretionary power, in the disposal of the land would be productive of the greatest advantage to the United States; and on this principle he could not conceive why the surveyors should not determine the relative quality, that the United States may stand some chance of getting the value of this property.

Mr. Livermore was in favor of Mr. Sedgwick's motion—and enlarged on the unreasonableness of fixing a particular price.

Mr. Jackson was opposed to investing a discretionary power to determine the price with any persons whatsoever;—it had been productive of mischievous consequences in the State of Georgia.—He was for fixing a price, and the highest price the best of the lands would bear—when that is sold, if the residue will not bear the price established, it can then be reduced.

Mr. Scott objected to the motion—he stated several difficulties; the principle was, that foreigners will be deterred from adventuring; owing to the uncertainty in the price: For when they arrive in the country to settle, they must purchase, and they will then lie at the mercy of speculators.

(To be continued.)

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 29.

Mr. Carrol took his seat this day.

The bill directing the mode in which the evidences of the debt of the United States, which have been, or may be lost or destroyed, shall be renewed, was read a second time, and referred to a committee of the whole house on Monday next, 100 copies were ordered to be printed.

The petition of Shubael Swaine, a prisoner confin'd in gaol for a breach of the revenue law, praying Congress to take his case into consideration and remit his fine, was read, and on motion referred to a committee consisting of Mr. Goodhue, Mr. Livermore and Mr. Sinnickson.

Mr. Fitzsimons presented the petition of Philip Buck, praying compensation for disability occasion'd by services on board one of the row galleys during the late war, and for a schooner lost; which was read and referred to the Secretary at War.

Mr. Heister presented the petition of Anna Wilhelmina Elizabeth Longcanner, praying compensation for services rendered by her late husband, during the war, which was read, and referred to the Secretary at war.

Mr. Lawrence presented the petition of Winthrop Sargent, praying compensation for additional services, whilst executing and performing the duties of Governor of the Western Territory, which was read and referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Agreeable to the order of the day, the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole to take into consideration the bill to provide for the delivery of goods, wares and merchandize, in the river Delaware, in the State of Pennsylvania, in case of obstruction by ice.

Mr. Boudinot in the chair.

The committee made sundry amendments, which were reported to the house, the same were read, other amendments were proposed in the house which were agreed to, and the bill as amended was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

The house proceeded to consider a motion made yesterday by Mr. Tucker, that the committee appointed to prepare and bring in a militia bill, be instructed to bring in a clause to this effect. "Be it enacted, That the militia of the several States of the union consisting of such persons as are, or may be enrolled by them respectively, shall be organized, armed and disci-