

1841.

RESOLUTIONS.

No. 2.

Passed Mar. 9, 1841. Report and Resolutions in relation to the Public Lands.

The committee to whom so much of the Governor's message, as relates to the Public Lands, was referred, beg leave to report:

That in ignorance of any constitutional rule, imposing upon His Excellency the duty of forestalling legislative action, upon a claim of infinite importance to the State we represent, by denying, in his executive capacity, the justice of such claim, and impairing the power with which it might be prosecuted, by division between two departments of the State Government, we confess the surprise with which we listened to his communication, so far as relates to the subject committed to us.

We should have supposed that in our present exigencies, His Excellency might have permitted that department of the State to which its financial interests are entrusted, to act upon any subject connected with those interests, unobstructed by volunteer opposition from the executive, even if we were forbid to rely upon its efficient aid. This supposition has been delusive; Maryland, in the assertion of claims, memorized by the circumstances attending their origin, has not merely, it seems, to contend with those, whom local and sectional feelings move to opposition, but from the high place of authority where she has in her confidence reposed the protection, in part, of her interests, she is doomed to hear the voice of denial of their justice, and a denunciation of their prosecution.

The peculiar condition in which, from these circumstances, your committee has been placed, renders it necessary that in justice to the character of our good old State, and to relieve ourselves from the reproach of an unjust aim, we should enter upon a more detailed history of the public lands than would have been otherwise necessary.

Between the period of Cabot's discovery and the struggle with Great Britain, which terminated in her recognition of the independence of the United States, the whole territory now comprised within their limits, north of the Florida's and east of the Mississippi, was ceded, at different periods, by the Crown of Great Britain, to companies and individuals adventuring a discovery, and settlements of the lands.

The grants thus made, were in several instances resumed by the Crown, and made the subjects of the creation of