

## SENATE....No. 118.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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IN SENATE, March 25, 1862.

The Joint Special Committee, to whom was referred the Message of His Excellency the Governor "respecting the legacy of two portraits bequeathed to the Commonwealth by the late William H. Sumner, together with the accompanying communication of the executor of the last will of said Sumner," have considered the subject referred to them, and respectfully submit the following

#### R E P O R T :

These two portraits represent to us Governor Increase Sumner and Governor Thomas Gage, men who, in the words of His Excellency the Governor, "were once conspicuous actors in the history of Massachusetts."

Governor Sumner was the son of a farmer of Roxbury, where he was born Nov. 27, 1746. He graduated at Harvard College in 1767, and in 1770 commenced the practice of law in his native town. He was elected a representative of Roxbury in 1776, and annually thereafter till 1780, when he was chosen a senator, which office he filled the two succeeding years by the almost unanimous choice of his constituents. He was also a member of the convention for forming the State Constitution. In 1782 he was chosen by the legislature a delegate to Con-

gress, but having been made in the same year an associate justice of the supreme judicial court, he never took his seat in the former body. He was a member of the State convention called in 1789 for considering the Federal Constitution, and by his high position and qualifications was able to render valuable services towards the attainment of its happy result. After approving himself to the public as a "dispassionate, impartial, discerning, able and accomplished judge" for a period of nearly fifteen years, he was elected governor; and was the last chief magistrate of Massachusetts whose election was proclaimed from the eastern balcony of the old State House, as he was the first to dedicate the "stately edifice" in which we are now assembled, to the "honor, freedom, independence and security of our country." Governor Sumner was re-elected in 1798 and 1799: receiving in the last year the unanimous vote of nearly half of the towns in the State. He was then in declining health, and at the commencement of the next political year it was manifest that he was near his end. In order, however, to satisfy the constitutional scruples of the legislature about the right of the lieutenant-governor to act as chief magistrate after the death of the governor, unless the latter had accepted the office, he received a committee of that body at his bedside, and declared his acceptance of the office. He lived but a few days after this formality. His death took place in Roxbury, June 7, 1799, at the age of fifty-two.

Twenty-three years of public service in prominent stations, all of which were adorned by his virtues and talents, entitle his name to be gratefully remembered by the people of Massachusetts, and render it proper that the legislature should thankfully accept the portrait of him which his son bequeathed to the Commonwealth.

The portrait was painted by Johnson, an artist not known to fame; but the picture is creditable to his talents, and has been recently cleaned and set in a handsome frame. The Committee recommend that it be accepted, and hung on the wall of the Senate chamber.

The other portrait bequeathed by General Sumner to the Commonwealth, that of Governor Gage, can never have any other value in the estimation of the people of the State than such as it possesses as a historical memento. He was born

in England. In 1763 he succeeded Gen. Amherst in chief command of the British forces in America, and in 1774 became governor of Massachusetts—the last one appointed by the king of England. He arrived in Boston May 17, and though “he was received with great parade,” and “an elegant dinner was provided for his welcome” at Faneuil Hall, it soon became apparent that the work he was commissioned to do, together with the natural repulsiveness of his character, would make him odious to the people. His career as governor of Massachusetts was terminated soon after the battle of Bunker Hill, when he was superseded by General Howe. He returned to England, and died in 1787. Neither history nor tradition have preserved any account of his career or of his character that can lead us to respect his memory; but we can gaze upon his portrait with interest, if not with affection, and the Committee therefore recommend that it be accepted and placed in the State library, in the care of the librarian. The portrait is a colored crayon, by an unknown artist.

The Committee recommend the passage of the accompanying resolve.

DANIEL S. RICHARDSON,  
JOHN J. BABSON,  
*Of the Senate.*

W. B. CALHOUN,  
E. D. FOSTER,  
EVERETT TORREY,  
DEXTER BLOOD,  
B. C. BROWN,  
ASA E. LOVELL,  
C. F. CLAFLIN,  
*Of the House.*

## Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-Two.

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### R E S O L V E

In relation to the Portraits of Governor Sumner and Governor Gage.

*Resolved,* That his excellency the governor be requested to receive the portraits of Governor Sumner and Governor Gage, bequeathed to the Commonwealth by the late General William H. Sumner, and cause the same to be placed as recommended by the committee to which was referred the message of his excellency relating to that subject; and that he be further requested to convey to the executors of the will of General Sumner, the grateful appreciation by the Commonwealth of the interest manifested by him in his native State in making this bequest.