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## HOUSE.....No. 25.

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Reported by a Select Committee—viz. Messrs. Palfrey of Salem, Child of  
Boston, and Harrington of Worcester.

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### Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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The Committee to whom was referred an order of the 8th instant, “To inquire whether any, and if any, what alteration is necessary in the mode of procuring the State Printing,”

## REPORT,

That after mature deliberation upon the subject referred to them, they are unanimously of opinion, That it would be consistent with the dignity of the Commonwealth, and true economy in the end, to alter the mode of procuring the State Printing, for the following reasons :

The manner of obtaining this work, for many years past, by contracting with those persons who offered to execute it at the lowest rates, has had a tendency, by exciting competition, gradually to reduce the prices for the work far below the standard rates at which similar work is executed for individuals, and, as your Committee believe, to such an extremely inadequate rate, as to preclude the Printers, without great pecuniary sacrifices, from resorting to those means of forwarding their work, in cases of pressure and emergency, which they would be enabled to employ were they allowed a fair and reasonable compensation for their labor;—and the consequence has been, as we have witnessed at the present session, that loud complaints have arisen of delay in furnishing the documents ordered by the Legislature, and of embarrassment and loss of time in the proceedings of the two branches. It may be said, that the contract having been voluntarily entered into by the Printers, they can offer no excuse or apology for a want of promptitude, and that it is their duty, at all hazards, to fulfil the letter of the bond. But the Committee are impressed with the belief that the members of this Legislature are actuated by feelings too honorable and liberal to decide upon a case of this nature according to the doctrines of a *Shylock*, and that they would not insist upon the “pound of flesh,” when absolute death or ruin must ensue. The only remedy in future for the delays and evils complained of, the Committee think, will be the adoption of a more liberal system in procuring the execution of the work.

The Committee are also of opinion, that the election of State Printers by the Legislature would place them on more elevated ground, and enhance their responsi-

bility to such a degree, as to ensure promptitude in executing the orders of the various departments. This practice has uniformly prevailed in Congress, and in most of the State Legislatures, and, as your Committee think, places the governments which adopt it in honorable contrast with that which seeks to cheapen the labor and screw down the prices of worthy and industrious mechanics, and thereby effect the saving of a miserable pittance to the treasury of a great Commonwealth, from erroneous notions of economy and retrenchment.

The Committee therefore respectfully recommend the adoption of the accompanying Resolve,

All which is respectfully submitted,

Per order of the Committee.

W. PALFRAY, JR. *Chairman.*

## RESOLVE,

*Respecting the public Printing.*

*Resolved,* That the two Houses choose the State Printer by a concurrent vote, at each session of the Legislature, for the ensuing year.

*Resolved,* That the quantity of work done by said Printer shall be certified by the Clerks of the two Houses, and by the executive officers, who shall keep a copy, and an exact account of the number of copies of every document which shall be printed for their respective departments, which copies and accounts shall be delivered to the Treasurer, at the close of each year.

*Resolved,* That the Treasurer and Secretary of State, shall settle the Printers' accounts according to the established market rates of printing for the time being, excepting for the paper, which shall be [paid for at the manufacturer's prices, and no profit thereon allowed to the Printer,—the bills of the paper maker to be required as vouchers.

*Resolved,* That any existing Resolve or Order, inconsistent with the foregoing, be and the same is hereby repealed.