Report.

Your committee will make but few remarks on the printed bill or charter, which was laid on the tables of members on the day when the petition was offered for presentation, and which was pointed out in a manuscript prefix to the printed memorial, as that which it was desired should be sent to the Legislature, after having been amended in such manner as might seem proper to the City Council. This charter, your committee have most convincing reason to believe was never seen, at least by many of those who signed the printed memorial; and formed no part of the memorial offered for their signature; said memorial merely praying "that a law may be passed giving to the High School of Baltimore Collegiate powers;" and also asking for an annual donation from the state. For these considerations your committee will not occupy time by examining this charter, except to observe that section 3. which would enable "the Trustees and Board of Commissioners to make fundamental ordinances for the government of this Institution" &c. and section 11. which appoints by State enactment the present principal and teachers of the High School, its principal and teachers under the charter, would forever take from the Mayor and City Council all efficient control over the School and its teachers, unless the Mayor and City Council saw proper to resort to that extreme power held, and sometimes exercised by the Commons of England against the arbitrary exercise of kingly prerogatives, viz: the withholding of supplies. A republican government, like that of our city, your committee think, will be cautious not to place itself by having a corporation within a corporation, in this extreme position. In the manuscript paper, prefixed to the printed memorial and the names of the petitioners, it is said, "Believing that the objects set forth in the accompanying memorial and charter are calculated, if obtained, to promote the public weal" &c. Now, your committee, having conversed with numbers of those who signed the printed memorial – which, let it be observed, says not a word about a "charter" – have not found one who ever saw the "charter" laid on the tables of members, or who said he would have signed any petition or memorial praying for the enactment of any law of incorporation which would take away, in any respect, the absolute and entire control of the City Council over the High School. Written testimony on this point is now in possession of the Council. Your committee present facts without comment.

Your committee will now proceed to examine briefly the expediency of presenting to the Legislature, by the Mayor and City

City Council, a memorial praying for the passage of a state law conferring collegiate powers on the High School. Powers of this nature could not be conferred without an act of incorporation – the necessity for a charter being inherent in the very nature of the power. Indeed, this is admitted by the petitions; because if the Mayor and City Council could confer collegiate powers on the School, why apply to the Legislature? The answer obviously is, because a charter, or act of incorporation only can confer collegiate powers.

A law of this kind could not be passed without making the High School a corporate body; and consequently, so far as the grant in the charter might extend, without taking some degree of control from the corporation of Baltimore. To this your committee unhesitatingly assent, the Council should not assent. The School belongs to the city, was established, and is supported at large expense, by her laws and her treasury, at a cost merely nominal to its beneficiaries. The fact that other institutions of learning in the city are incorporated, and have the power to confer collegiate honors, does not bear on the question at issue; inasmuch as these institutions have no connexion with the city – are not supported by her treasury or governed by her ordinances. Theirs is a distinct and independent corporation. Such powers, conferred on a public High School, would make it a corporation within a corporation, and might lead to acts highly prejudicial, if not destructive, to the best interests of public education. What sane man ever voluntarily relinquished the right of entire control over his own property? Yet this is, essentially, what the City Council is requested to accomplish.

Your committee are not acquainted with any High School, in this country, or in any country, which is vested with collegiate powers; and for the very reason that such schools are everywhere, in their very nature, distinct from colleges. The moment you convert them into colleges, they cease to be High Schools. In Philadelphia, for instance the High School is of elevated character, and is conducted by distinguished men; but does not confer collegiate honors. What then, your committee ask, what are the urgent reasons which should induce Baltimore to depart from all precedents? The Philadelphia high school confers testimonials on her pupils who satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of instruction; and your committee have prepared an ordinance, which is presented as part of this report, to confer the same mark of distinction on pupils of the Baltimore High Schools

This subject was before the last Council and was refused. The Boards of School Commissioners have refused to make a application for such power. No members of the community are more sincere

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