

To the American Planters and Farmers

THE gentlemen who possess and cultivate the soil, are in this country so numerous, and hold so great proportion of property, that they have right to a decided influence in the measures of government. In addressing you I speak to the people, whose will must ultimately determine the system of national police. An enlightened planter is a friend to manufactures, by which his raw materials are prepared for the use of man—he is a friend to commerce, which converts the surplus of his perishable produce into permanent wealth, and mingles the growth of every clime on the board of hospitality: Still the agricultural now is, and for a century to come must remain the prevailing interest both in riches and in influence. The war of independence was yours; and therefore became a war of blows too hard for the common enemy—our present form of government was first delineated by those who roll the tongue and drive the quill; it became a sacred reality by the zeal of your suffrages: and the measures of the treasury department must be addressed to your good understanding and sense of national honor to render them successful. Though the nature of your employment is such as precludes the opportunity of collecting information; your judgment must sanctify, and your firmness effectuate the public decrees. The evils resulting from a loss of public credit may affect others first—on you they fall heaviest. Merchants, monied men and those who have great property afloat, are on the watch—they have leisure to collect every information—a correspondence by every post and through half the world advertises them of the evil, and their property by some change in its situation is secured; while you without information and unsuspecting are ensnared. Every possible imposition in public credit will operate thus—either the price of your produce will fall, or the articles you purchase rise, or the deceitful medium center in your hands. When the state of credit, in any country, is such as excites a war of artifice between its citizens, they must be eventual sufferers, whose employment confines them in the field, at a distance from the course of information. The first thing you ought to demand is a stable system for the public debt, which may be done by placing the whole of every description under one responsible board; the next is a circulating medium of fixed value. To accomplish this I am sensible there must be some kind of direct taxation by the United States, for it is not probable that an impost and excise will equitably fund the whole debt. Direct taxation is now practised with a heavy hand by the separate States, and why should the exercise of this power by the general government be more dangerous, when attended with such circumstances that apart of the sum you now pay will be sufficient? If a change of system will remove half the weight you have borne these fifteen years, be not duped to lose the opportunity, by the artful suggestions of some men, who expect to gain more by the old game, than by a new one. The members of the general government are your representatives—your friends, and the beings of your own creation—their existence and popularity are in your hands, and they have every motive to guard your interest; more cannot be said of the State legislatures. Still further to remove all suspicions that the writer is acting an insidious part, I will compare your present situation with what it might be made, by an interposition of the general government.

Every State in the empire is heavily in debt—in each State there are different modes of imposing and collecting taxes, but in all, direct taxation of some kind is in use—in a few States arbitrary assessment is customary, which may be set down for the worst kind of imposition—in others every kind of property specifically is charged at certain rates affixed in the tax laws—in New-England your houses and lands, your cattle of every description, even your sons are taxed before their labor can pay for their support, and your mechanics are arbitrarily assessed for the labor of their hands. The tax laws have been varied annually, so that to understand the system of public demands is next to impossible—these changes in the tax laws, have opened a succession of speculation destructive and unintelligible to the unwary citizen.—The general taxation of all your property imperceptibly advances the amount to a grievance.—In Connecticut there are one hundred tax-gatherers, and in the other States a number proportioned to their extent.—The gentlemen qualified to do this duty, must be men of sagacity, and as such will not forget themselves, nor can we wish they should serve the public for nothing.—An average emolument to themselves of less than 200 dollars per annum, would not tempt them to execute the duty—this emolument arises from a public reward, mileage, forbearance money, with an opportunity of speculating among the ignorant; and tho it be not charged in the tax bills is eventually paid by the people—I blame not the collectors, their business requires industry

and watching, and is attended with risk, for they must lose the taxes of those who abscond, after their warrants are received; but I accuse a system so expensive to the people. One hundred tax gatherers at two hundred dollars each amount to twenty thousand dollars—this sum though not charged in any account whatever, is annually paid by the people of Connecticut—an enormous burthen! for the simple collection of taxes, and all this, on a plan which you have often been told is mighty cheap, and full of economy and liberty. Let us talk no more of the high salaries given by the United States, when our own plan bears so much harder on the people. The employing too many men in any public business, that it may be done at a cheap rate, always proves a sponge in the event. With the great sums you have paid, and collected in this expensive manner; with the general taxation of your whole property, you have not obtained the reputation of being just to your creditors. The evil still remains, and must remain without a general reform of system. Most of my remarks will apply to all the States, and as this publication first appears in Connecticut, I have taken it as an instance to exemplify the whole.—Let not these truths excite faction—be calm—reverence government, and public justice, and you will be remedied. Compare with this picture a system I will propose—Let your State debt be assumed by the United States.—In addition to the impost and excise, give them a direct tax.—Let this tax be imposed on the single article of improved land.—Three cents per acre, which is two pence currency of New-England very nearly, will be sufficient to establish the faith and justice of your country, and content the public creditors, if they are reasonable men.—Let this be paid in the money of the merchant, for if there be a depreciated currency in circulation, you will eventually rue the consequences.—Eight tax-gatherers will be sufficient to collect an excise and land tax in Connecticut, which now employs one hundred.—Make these men responsible; give them the salary of eight hundred dollars per ann. and suffer no kind of fee to be taken from the people. This will make a saving of nearly fourteen thousand dollars, in the article of collection, which is principally paid by the poorest citizens; and for which they have no credit in the public opinion. The planter, possessing one hundred acres in fair cultivation, will have to pay annually sixteen shillings New-England currency, for the whole amount of his taxes, and without any additional fee to collectors; and those who have less estate in proportion. Every wise planter would compound with the public for this sum—I believe it would be sufficient; and I appeal to the honest cultivators of the earth, whether it be more than one third of the sum they have been used to pay.

My next number shall contain further remarks on a land tax.

PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS.

ABSTRACT of JOURNAL of the FIRST SESSION of the SENATE of the UNITED STATES.

FRIDAY August 7.

IN the absence of the Vice President, proceeded to elect a President pro tempore, and the votes being collected and counted, the Hon. John Langdon was unanimously appointed.

A message from the President of the United States, by General Knox.—See Gazette of August 12.

This message was ordered to lie for consideration.

Mr. Morris, in behalf of the committee on the bill, entitled, "An act for allowing a compensation to the President and Vice President of the United States," reported an amendment, to wit: To expunge the provision made for the Vice President, "Five thousand dollars," and insert "Six thousand dollars."

On motion to reduce the provision for the President of the United States from twenty-five thousand to twenty thousand dollars, Passed in the Negative.

On motion to make the provision for the Vice President eight thousand dollars instead of five thousand dollars—Passed in the negative.

And on motion, the further consideration of this clause of the bill was postponed.

Mr. Grayson requested leave of absence, for the recovery of his health.

The concurrence of the Senate, upon the resolve of the House on the mode of enrolment, and the presentation of bills, &c. was carried to the House of Representatives. Adjourned.

MONDAY, August 10.

Mr. Strong, on behalf of the joint committee appointed the 5th of August, "To consider what business is necessary to be acted upon prior to an adjournment, and to report a proper time at which an adjournment shall take place," reported; and the report was ordered to lie for consideration.

A message from the House of Representatives, with a bill, entitled, "An act for allowing compensation to the members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, and to the officers of both Houses," requesting the concurrence of the Senate therein.

The Senate proceeded to the second reading of a bill, entitled, "An act for registering and clearing of vessels, regulating the coasting trade, and for other purpose."

Ordered, That it be committed to Mr. Morris, Mr. Dalton, Mr. Langdon, Mr. Butler and Mr. King. Adjourned.

TUESDAY, August 11.

A message from the House of Representatives, with a resolve of the House, of the 10th of August, providing,

"That the Survey directed by Congress, in their act of June the 6th, 1788, be made and returned into the Treasury without delay." Adjourned.

FRIDAY, August 14.

The petition of Nathaniel Gorham, praying that a resolution of the House of Representatives of the United States, providing, "That the above survey be made," might not pass the Senate in its present form, for reasons set forth in the petition—

The resolve of the House of Representatives of the United States of the 11th of August, referred to in the said petition,—and

The petition of Andrew Ellicot, on the same subject, were severally read; and the consideration of the business was postponed until Wednesday next.

Proceeded to a second reading of the bill, entitled, "An act providing for the expenses which may attend negotiations or treaties with the Indian tribes, and the appointment of Commissioners for managing the same."

Ordered, That the bill be committed to Mr. Few, Mr. Ellsworth, Mr. King, Mr. Lee and Mr. Butler. Adjourned.

MONDAY, August 17.

The committee appointed to take into consideration the bill, entitled, "An act providing for the expenses which may attend negotiations or treaties with the Indian tribes, and the appointment of commissioners for managing the same," reported that it be

Resolved, That it be allowed and paid to a Superintendent of Indian affairs in the Southern Department, that may be nominated by the President, and appointed by, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, the sum of

per day, including his expenses, for the time he may be employed in attending a treaty, proposed to be held by the Commissioners of the United States and the Creek Indian, at the Rock-Landing, in the State of Georgia, on the 15th day of September next.—

"That in case the proposed treaty should fail in the desired object, of establishing peace between the citizens of the United States and the Creek Indians, Congress will make such grants of money, and pursue such other measures, as will be necessary for the protection and safety of the inhabitants of the southern frontiers, and best secure the peace of United States."

And on motion to accept the report, it passed in the negative.

On motion, that it be

Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to nominate a fit person for Superintendent of Indian affairs in the Southern Department, in order that he may be sent forward as soon as may be, to act with the Commissioners of Indian affairs in the Southern Department, appointed pursuant to a resolution of Congress, passed on the day of and aid them in carrying into effect a treaty that is proposed to be held with the Creek Nation, on the 15th day of September next, in the State of Georgia, at the Rock-Landing.—

That the sum of dollars be delivered to the said Superintendent, to be appropriated for the immediate purpose of the said treaty, for which sum he shall be accountable.—

That the President of the United States be requested to instruct the said Superintendent and Commissioners, to hear and fully investigate all the complaints and grievances, of the said Creek Indians, and to use all the means in their power to quiet their minds and do them ample justice, agreeably to the aforesaid resolution of Congress, and instructions heretofore given for that purpose: That if the said Indians should prove refractory, or refuse to treat and establish peace on just and reasonable terms, then and in that case, the said Superintendent and Commissioners be directed to make immediate report thereof to the President of the United States, and Congress will make such grants of money and pursue such other measures, as will be necessary for the safety and protection of the inhabitants of the Southern frontiers, and best secure the peace of the United States.—It passed in the negative.

On motion, that it be

Resolved, That the President of the United States be authorized and empowered, and he is hereby authorized and empowered, should the Creek Indians decline to make peace with the State of Georgia, to take effectual measures for covering the State of Georgia from the incursions of the Indians, either by ordering some of the troops now at Fort Harmar to march to the frontiers of Georgia, or by embodying such a number of the militia as he shall think sufficient to insure to the citizens of Georgia protection, and the cultivation of their lands in peace and security, and that he be empowered to draw on the Treasury for defraying the expenses of the same.—And on motion for the previous question, to wit: "Shall the main question be now put?" it passed in the negative. Adjourned.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF THE OHIO COMPANY.

WHEREAS, in the opinion of the Agents, it is very much for the interest of the proprietors at large, that all the lands of the purchase should be divided and allotted as immediately as may be—And in order to accommodate them generally, by the option of classing as they may think proper, and drawing their rights or shares (where they may possess more than one) either together in contiguity, or by detaching and annexing them to distinct classes or divisions (at their own election) to give them the greater chance for variety in soil and situation—It is unanimously resolved, That as soon as the exploring committee shall have appropriated the lands for donation settlements, in quantity sufficient for all the proprietors, WINTHROP SARGENT, JOSEPH GILLMAN, and RETURN J. MEIGS, Esquires, who are hereby appointed a committee for that purpose, shall immediately make out, upon a large scale, a complete map or plan of the whole purchase from the best information, which they may be then able to obtain, expressing all the lands of the eight acre, three acre, city lots and commons, one hundred and sixty acre, and donation lots, the reserved lots of Congress, school lots, and lots appropriated for religious purposes—also, the two townships given by Congress for a university, and the towns or situations for towns to be reserved by the company for a future allotment.—That, all the residuary lands shall be, by them, the said committee of three, divided and numbered upon paper, into forty equal grand divisions of twenty-five shares each, as like in quality as may be: That each grand division be divided into five sub-divisions of five shares each, and each sub-division into sections of single shares.—That as soon as the map or plan is completed, the agents will form or class their subscribers (who shall not previously class themselves) by sections or single shares, into sub-divisions of five, and grand divisions of twenty-five, and immediately proceed to drawing by lot for said lands: by grand divisions, sub-divisions and sections: That in all draughts of sub-divisions (into sections) which may be made up of proprietors, holding four, three, or two and single shares, it shall be the usage for the greatest proprietor, or holder of the greatest number of shares, to take his lands in contiguity, by lot, either in the southern or northern part of the sub-division, where they shall be numbered from north to south, and in the western or eastern (by lot also) where they may be numbered from west to east; and where sub-divisions may be made up of two proprietors of two shares each, and one of one share, the two greatest proprietors shall receive their sections, by lot, either in the southern or western part of the sub-division. Resolved, That the before named committee, be directed to prepare the names and numbers, and make all the necessary arrangements for the intended draught: That previous to the drawing for this ultimate grand division of lands, there shall be returns of the proprietors, as they may be classed by the agents (or otherwise) lodged in the Secretary's office, and it is recommended in all cases to consult the inclinations and interests of the proprietors in the order of classing.

Resolved, That the agents will give public notice of the time and place of drawing, and that there be two persons no ways interested in the draughts, who shall be sworn to the faithfully drawing out the names and numbers from the boxes, and who alone shall be employed in this business for the draught of grand divisions, sub-divisions, and sections.

Resolved, That the Secretary cause the foregoing resolutions to be published in the newspapers of New-York, and the New-England States; to the end that the proprietors at large may have the option of classing themselves as they may think proper: And they are hereby requested to do so, and to express themselves upon this subject, either to their respective agents, or by information in writing addressed to, and to be lodged with the Secretary, at his office in the city of Marietta, previous to the first Monday of March, 1790—Upon which day it is expected the division will take place.

WINTHROP SARGENT, Secretary to the Ohio Company.

Marietta, 3d November, 1789.