

**THOUGHTS ON GOVERNMENT,**

APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT STATE OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES.

Written in the Year 1776,

By the VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, Then a Member of Congress;

In a LETTER to the Hon. GEORGE WYTHER, of VIRGINIA.

(Concluded from our last.)

MY DEAR SIR,

IN the present exigency of American affairs, when, by an act of Parliament we are put out of the royal protection, and consequently discharged from our allegiance; and it has become necessary to assume government for our immediate security, the Gov. Lieut. Gov. Secretary, Treasurer, Commissary, Attorney-General, should be chosen by joint ballot, of both Houses. And these and all other elections, especially of Representatives and Counsellors, should be annual, there not being in the whole circle of the sciences, a maximum more infallible than this, "Where annual elections end, there slavery begins."

These great men, in this respect, should be, once a year

"Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,  
"They rise, they break, and to that sea return."

This will teach them the great political virtues of humility, patience, and moderation, without which every man in power becomes a ravenous beast of prey.

This mode of constituting the great offices of state will answer very well for the present; but if, by experiment, it should be found inconvenient, the legislature may, at its leisure, devise other methods of creating them, by elections of the people at large, as in Connecticut, or it may enlarge the term for which they shall be chosen to seven years, or three years, or for life, or make any other alterations which the society shall find productive of its ease, its safety, its freedom, or in one word, its happiness.

A rotation of all offices, as well as of Representatives and Counsellors has many advocates, and is contended for with many plausible arguments. It would be attended no doubt with many advantages, and if the society has a sufficient number of suitable characters to supply the great number of vacancies which would be made by such a rotation, I can see no objection to it. These persons may be allowed to serve for three years, and then be excluded three years, or for any longer or shorter term.

Any seven or nine of the legislative Council may be made a Quorum, for doing business as a Privy Council, to advise the Governor in the exercise of the executive branch of power, and in all acts of state.

The Governor should have the command of the militia, and of all your armies. The power of pardons should be with the Governor and Council.

Judges, Justices and all other officers, civil and military, should be nominated and appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of Council, unless you choose to have a government more popular; if you do, all officers, civil and military, may be chosen by joint ballot of both houses, or in order to preserve the independence and importance of each house, by ballot of one house, concurring by the other. Sheriffs should be chosen by the freeholders of counties—so should Registers of Deeds and Clerks of Counties.

All officers should have commissions, under the hand of the Governor and seal of the Colony.

The dignity and stability of government in all its branches, the morals of the people and every blessing of society, depend so much upon an upright and skillful administration of justice, that the judicial power ought to be distinct from both the legislative and executive, and independent upon both, that so it may be a check upon both, as both should be checks upon that. The Judges therefore should always be men of learning and experience in the laws, of exemplary morals, great patience, calmness, coolness and attention. Their minds should not be distracted with jarring interests; they should not be dependant upon any man, or body of men. To these ends their commissions should be during good behavior, and their salaries ascertained and established by law. For misbehavior the grand Inquest of the Colony, the House of Representatives, should impeach them before the Governor and Council, where they should have time and opportunity to make their defence, but if convicted, should be removed from their offices, and subjected to such other punishment as shall be thought proper.

A militia law, requiring all men, or with very few exceptions, besides cases of conscience, to be provided with arms and ammunition, to be trained at certain seasons, and requiring counties, towns, or other small districts, to be provided with public stocks of ammunition and entrenching utensils, and with some settled plans for transporting provisions after the militia, when marched to defend their country against sudden invasions, and requiring certain districts to be provided with field pieces, companies of matrosses, and perhaps some regiments of light horse, is always a wise institution, and in the present circumstances of our country, indispensable.

Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people, are so extremely wise and useful, that to a humane and generous mind, no expence for this purpose would be thought extravagant.

The very mention of sumptuary laws will excite a smile. Whether our countrymen have wisdom and virtue enough to submit to them I know not. But the happiness of the people might be greatly promoted by them, and a revenue saved sufficient to carry on this war forever. Frugality is a great revenue, besides curing us of vanities, levities, and fopperies, which are real antidotes to all great, manly and warlike virtues.

But must not all commissions run in the name of a King? No. Why may they not as well run thus, "The Colony of to A. B. greeting, and be testified by the Governor?"

Why may not writs, instead of running in the name of a King, run thus, "The Colony of to the Sheriff, &c." and be testified by the Chief Justice.

Why may not indictments conclude, "against the peace of the Colony of and the dignity of the same?"

A Constitution, founded on these principles, introduces knowledge among the people, and inspires them with a conscious dignity, becoming Freemen. A general emulation takes place, which causes good humour, sociability, good manners, and good morals to be general. That elevation of sentiment, inspired by such a government, makes the common people brave and enterprising. That ambition which is inspired by it makes them sober, industrious and frugal. You will find among them some elegance, perhaps, but more solidity; a little pleasure, but a great deal of business—some politeness, but more civility. If you compare such a country with the regions of domination, whether monarchical, or aristocratical, you will fancy yourself in Arcadia, or Elysiun.

If the Colonies should assume governments separately, they should be left entirely to their own choice of the forms, and if a Continental Constitution should be formed, it should be a Congress, containing a fair and adequate Representation of the Colonies, and its authority should be confined to these cases, viz. war, trade, disputes between Colony and Colony, the Post-Office, and the unappropriated lands of the Crown, as they used to be called.

These Colonies, under such forms of government, and in such a union, would be unconquerable by all the Monarchies of Europe.

You and I, my dear friend, have been sent into life, at a time when the greatest lawgivers of antiquity would have wished to have lived. How few of the human race have ever enjoyed an opportunity of making an election of government more than of

air, soil, or climate, for themselves or their children. When! before the present epocha, had three millions of people full power and a fair opportunity to form and establish the wisest and happiest government that human wisdom can contrive? I hope you will avail yourself and your country of that extensive learning and indefatigable industry which you possess, to assist her in the formations of the happiest governments, and the best character of a great people.—For myself, I must beg you to keep my name out of sight, for this feeble attempt, if it should be known to be mine, would oblige me to apply to myself those lines of the immortal John Milton, in one of his sonnets,

"I did but teach the age to quit their cloggs,  
"By the plain rules of ancient Liberty,  
"When lo! a barbarous noise surrounded me,  
"Of owls, and cuckoos, asses, apes and dogs."

**EXTRACT.**

Dr. PRICE, in his Revolution Sermon, after reproaching, in pointed terms, adulation to men in power as debasing to those who offer, and corrupting to those who receive it, observes, "It is a trite observation, that extremes generally beget one another: This is particularly true in the present case. Persons justly informed on the subject of government, when they see men dazzled by looking up to high stations, and observe loyalty carried to a length that implies ignorance and servility; such persons, in such circumstances, are in danger of turning at all public authority, and throwing off that respectful demeanor to persons invested with it, which the order of society requires. There is undoubtedly a particular deference and homage due to civil magistrates, on account of their stations and offices; nor can that man be either truly wise, or truly virtuous, who despises government, and wantonly speaks evil of his rulers—or who does not by all the means in his power endeavor to strengthen their hands, and to give weight to their exertions in the discharge of their duty."

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 28, 1790.**

NOTICE is hereby given, that proposals will be received at the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, until the 31st day of December next inclusive, for the building of a LIGHT HOUSE, nearly of the dimensions proposed by the late Commissioners of Virginia and Maryland, upon the lot of land on Cape Henry, in the County of Princess Ann, and State of Virginia, lately ceded for that purpose to the United States. It is desired, that the proposals may leave the election, whether the building above the foundation shall be of brick or stone, and as the cost and charges of those materials vary, it is expected, that a corresponding difference will be made in the terms offered.

The foundation of the Light-House is to be of stone, and sunk to the depth of thirteen feet below the water table, over the top of which the pavement is to be laid. The diameter thereof is to be twenty seven feet six inches, with a vacancy of about nine feet in the centre.

The diameter of the base is to be twenty six feet, at which place the thickness of the walls is to be six feet. The height from the bottom of the water table to the top of the stone work is to be twenty seven feet, where the diameter is to be six feet six inches, and the thickness of the walls three feet. The form is to be an oblong, having three windows in the east, and four in the west. If it be built of brick, it is to be faced with the glazy kind, if of stone, it is to be faced with hewn or hammer-dressed stone.

On the top of the stone work is to be a floor of joists, bedded therein, planked over and covered with copper, extending about two feet eight inches beyond the wall, thereby forming an eve, which is to be finished with a cornice, the whole having a descent from the centre sufficient to throw off the water.

The lantern is to be supported by eight posts of wrought Iron of three inches square and twenty feet in length, ten feet of which are to be wrought into the stone wall on the inner part at each corner. The diameter of it is to be ten feet, leaving a platform on the outside thereof of about six feet in width. All the work above this is to be of iron and copper. The lantern is to be ten feet high, having a semicircular roof of five feet more, with iron rafters covered with copper. The whole space between the posts supporting the lantern, is to be occupied by the sashes, which are to be made of iron, each sash is to have twenty-eight panes of glass, twelve by fourteen inches. One of the sashes on the south west side is to be hung with hinges for a door to go out upon the platform, from the outer part of which to the roof of the lantern is to be a frame of iron covered with a net work of strong brass wire, to preserve the glass from injuries by hail and flights of birds in the night.

The rafters of the lantern are to be well fastened to an iron hoop, over which is a copper funnel, through which the smoke may pass into a large copper ventilator in the form of a man's head, capable of containing one hundred gallons. This head is to be so placed as to be turned by a large vane on the spire above it, that the hole for venting the smoke may always be to the leeward. Eight dormant ventilators of six inches diameter are to be fixed in the roof of the lantern.

A close stove is to be provided and fixed in the lantern, which is to be furnished with eight lamps, each capable of containing six quarts, hung in two tiers over each other transversely. There are to be six flights of stairs to ascend to the lantern, the entrance to which is to be by a door covered with copper. The building is to be furnished with two conductors, to secure it from the effects of lightning.

A frame house is to be built for the keeper, twenty feet square, two stories high, with a frame kitchen; the whole to be finished with lath and plaster.

A vault for the storage and safe keeping of the oil is to be built of stone at a convenient distance, twelve feet wide, and twenty in length. It is to be arched, and covered with earth or sand, over which a shed is to be built, and it is to be furnished with eight strong cedar cisterns with covers, each capable of containing two hundred gallons of oil. The entrance is to be secured by a strong door.

Good security for the faithful performance of the contract will be expected. Payments on account will be made at proper stages of the work, and the balance will be paid on its completion; or, if a suitable difference should be made in the terms, cash will be advanced for the purchase of materials and provisions.

The Printers in the several States are requested to insert this.

**TO BE LET,**

On very low terms—and entered upon immediately, until the first of May next.

THAT elegant new TWO STORY BRICK HOUSE, in the Bowery-Lane, formerly occupied by ROBERT GILBERT LIVINGSTON, deceased; it has seven Fire Places with a good Cellar under the whole House—a convenient out-House in the rear, with a Coach-House, and Stables; for further particulars enquire of MANGLE MINTHORN Corporation Dock.

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT, July 13, 1790.**

NOTICE is hereby given, that Proposals will be received at the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, to the first day of October next inclusive, for the supply of all rations, which may be required for the use of the United States, from the first day of January to the thirty first day of December 1791, both days inclusive, at the places, and within the districts herein after mentioned, viz.

At any place or places, betwixt Yorktown in the state of Pennsylvania, and Fort Pitt and at Fort Pitt,

At any place or places, betwixt Fort Pitt and Fort M'Intosh, on the River Ohio, and at Fort M'Intosh,

At any place or places, betwixt Fort M'Intosh and the mouth of the River Muskingum, and at the mouth of the River Muskingum,

At any place or places, betwixt the mouth of the River Muskingum, and up the said River to the Tuscarawas, and at the Tuscarawas, and thence over to the Cayoga River, and down the said River to its mouth.

At any place or places, betwixt the mouth of the river Muskingum, and the mouth of the Scioto River, and at the mouth of the said River Scioto.

At any place or places, betwixt the mouth of Scioto River, and the mouth of the great Miami at the mouth of the great Miami, and from thence to the Rapids, on the Falls of the Ohio, and at the said Rapids.

At any place or places, betwixt the mouth of the great Miami, up the said Miami, to and at Piquetown, and thence over to the Miami Village, on the river of the same name which empties into Lake Erie.

At any place or places from the rapids of the Ohio, to the mouth of the Wabash, thence up the said Wabash to Post St. Vincennes, at Post St. Vincennes, and thence up the said river Wabash, to the Miami Village, before described.

At any place or places, from the mouth of the Wabash river to the mouth of the river Ohio.

At any place or places, on the east side of the river Mississippi, from the mouth of the Ohio river, to the mouth of the Illinois river.

At any place or places, from the mouth of the Miami river to the Miami Village.

At any place or places, from the Miami Village to Sandusky, and at Sandusky, and from Sandusky to the mouth of Cayoga river.

At any place or places, betwixt Fort Pitt and Venango, and at Venango.

At any place or places, betwixt Venango and Le Beuf, and at Le Beuf betwixt Le Beuf and Presq' Isle, at Presq' Isle, and betwixt Presq' Isle and the mouth of Cayoga river.

At the mouth of Cayoga river, and at any place or places, on the route from Fort Pitt, to the mouth of Cayoga river, by the way of Big Beaver creek.

At any place or places, on the east side of the Mississippi, between the mouth of the Ohio and the river Margot inclusively.

At any place or places, from the said river Margot, to the river Yazour inclusively.

At any place or places from the mouth of the river Tennessee, to Ocochappo or Bear creek, on the said river inclusively.

Should any rations be required at any places, or within other districts, not specified in these proposals, the price of the same to be hereafter agreed on, betwixt the public and the contractor.

The rations to be supplied are to consist of the following articles, viz.

- One pound of bread or flour,
  - One pound of beef, or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound of pork,
  - Half a jill of rum, brandy or whiskey,
  - One quart of salt,
  - Two quarts of vinegar,
  - Two pounds of soap,
  - One pound of Candles,
- } per. 100 rations,
- The proposals must specify the lowest price per ration. No credit is required.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, Secretary of the Treasury.

**TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Sept. 20, 1790.**

IT is hereby made known, that the following arrangement has been adopted towards carrying into execution the Act, making provision for the debt of the United States, viz.

Loan-Office Certificates, and those issued by the Commissioners for the adjustment of accounts in the several States, will be receivable only at the Treasury and by the respective Commissioners of Loans within the States in which they were respectively issued. The Certificates issued by the Register of the Treasury, by the Pay Master General and Commissioner of Army Accounts, by the Commissioners for the adjustment of the Accounts of the Quarter Master's, Commissary's, Hospital, Clothing, and Marine Departments, Indents of Interest, and Bills of Old Emission, will be receivable indiscriminately at the Treasury and by the Commissioners of all the States. The situation of the Checks has dictated this arrangement for the greater security of the public against impositions by forged or counterfeit paper, and the details which have been adopted from the same consideration for the execution of the business are such, that it will give facility and dispatch, if applications from the Holders of Certificates of the Register of the Treasury and of the Paymaster General, and Commissioner of Army Accounts, and of the Commissioners of the five Departments above mentioned, are made in the first instance at the Treasury; and if applications from the Holders of Loan Office Certificates, and Certificates issued by the Commissioners for the adjustment of Accounts in the respective States, are made in like manner to the Commissioners of Loans within the States in which they were issued. Transfers can afterwards be made to any Office that the Proprietors of these Certificates may desire.

The printers of the several States are requested to insert this.

PURSUANT to a Resolve or act of Congress of the 10th day of May, 1780, relative to the destruction of Loan-Office Certificates by accident; notice is hereby given to all whom it may concern, that on the 2d day of January 1780, the house occupied by the subscriber in Market-Street, Philadelphia, took fire and was consumed, in which was lodged a number of Loan-Office certificates as pr. list below, all which were destroyed by the said fire: Therefore if any person, hath any objection why the said Certificates should not be renewed, agreeable to the resolves of Congress, they must make them before the expiration of three months, from the date hereof.

Invoice of Loan-Office Certificates destroyed in the house of John Holker on the 2d day of January 1780.

1778.	No.		Dols.
March 13.	1636	1 Samuel Cooke, jun. New-York,	600
	1673	1 ditto,	600
			Dollars, 1200.

In testimony whereof I have signed the present for publication.

New-York, July 26th, 1790.

**WAR DEPARTMENT, Sept. 9, 1790.**

INFORMATION is hereby given to all the military Invalids of the United States, that the sums to which they are annually entitled, and which will become due on the fourth day of March ensuing, will be paid on the said day, by the Commissioners of the Loans within the states respectively, under such regulations as the President of the United States may direct.

H. KNOX, Secretary for the Department of War.

(The Printers in the respective States are requested to publish the above in their newspapers, for the space of two Months.)

To be let, from 1st November, THE HOUSE in which the Editor now lives:—A good situation for a Boarding-House—being formerly occupied in that business.