



CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, Dec. 28.

(Continued from our last.)

Extract from the NEW-YORK MAGAZINE—  
for November, 1790.

THOUGH wealth may obtain respect, and though talents may gain admiration, yet it is the life of integrity and virtue which will alone secure to us the esteem of the world. This will command respect and regard, though fortune should rob us of her gifts, and though faction should deny us the display of our talents. Of the importance that a virtuous character is towards giving us public confidence, each day's observation may assure us. How many do we meet with in life, on whom nature hath bestowed the most distinguished talents, yet who remain undistinguished by public honors, merely because their countrymen have not a confidence in their virtue and integrity? while, on the other hand, how frequently do we see men of moderate abilities called to public employment, from the respect and veneration which is borne to the virtues of their private character? But as example is of more efficacy than precept, behold in the character of one whom you boast of as your fellow-citizen, and who now directs the finances of your country, a proof of the principle that I wish to establish, and let his success serve as a stimulus to your virtue and to your ambition.

Though even now at an age, at which most characters begin their political career, yet he hath for years, received the most flattering marks of public distinction, and now holds one of the most important offices in any government. In his appointment to that office the wishes of the public had anticipated the judicious nomination of our first magistrate, whose discernment in estimating characters is not the least valuable of his political talents.

Though his abilities, no doubt, first procured him public distinction, yet to the uniformity of his political conduct, and to his inflexible and undeviating integrity, he unquestionably owes that unbounded confidence which he now enjoys, which is so honorable to himself, and so serviceable to his country.

S A L E M, December 21.

The contention in Martinique appears to have no reference to the late French revolution, as both parties acknowledge the present government in France. From the revolution, however, the colonies derived the privilege of constituting Assemblies to legislate for them. The equal laws made by the Colonial Assembly of Martinique no longer left any exclusive commercial privileges to the town of St. Pierre; and the free people of color felt the enjoyment of the rights of men. This equality excited the jealousy of the inhabitants of St. Pierre, and produced an enmity towards the rest of the colony, which continually increased, till the massacre of the Mulattoes on the 3d of June last. The justice of government was now obliged to interpose, and from hence have arisen the parties, of the government, planters, free mulattoes, &c. on one side—and the inhabitants of St. Pierre, on the other.

A L B A N Y, Dec. 23.

A letter from a young gentleman of this city, now at Manchester, Vermont, dated the 20th instant, mentions the sudden death of two young women of that town, (Patty Savage, aged 18, and Lois Godrich, 16) who having agreed, on Wednesday evening the 15th, to sleep in a newly plastered bed-room—on account of the dampness of the walls the servant was directed to place a pot of charcoal in it; and on the morning following! melancholy to relate! the latter was found dead, and the former possessed only some of the remaining symptoms of life—she however lived three or four hours.

ELIZABETH TOWN, Dec. 29.

Extract of a letter from Willborough, (on Lake Champlain) to the printer hereof, dated Dec. 10.

“The crops of every kind of grain on the borders of Lake Champlain, have been very great; this year, winter and summer wheat especially; a farmer in Willborough had, from one single root of wheat, one hundred and forty-eight ears, most of them of a large growth; one of the reapers cut the grain before the number of ears were noticed, so that the number of grains could not be counted; but the field in which it grew, contains 28 acres, on which was sown 31 bushels, and it yielded upwards of 800.”

N E W - Y O R K, January, 3.

The latest accounts from Martinique state the affairs of that Island to be still in the greatest confusion; the planters, and the inhabitants of the town of St. Pierre being still in arms against each other, and as often as opportunity offers committing the greatest enormities. However, a seventy four gun ship and a frigate having lately arrived from France to the aid of the country, the town of St. Pierre is entirely blocked up both by land and sea, and being cut off from supplies on every side, it must soon be brought to submission. The disputes in this island are said to have no reference to the late French revolution, as both parties acknowledge the present government; but merely arise from the general Assembly having taken away certain exclusive commercial privileges from the town of St. Pierre.

MR. LAWRENCE. The people have great dependance on the Western Territory as a fund to extinguish their debt; it therefore becomes the duty of the government to obtain the best price they can for it. The question is, whether we shall fix a price, or adopt the plan proposed by the gentleman from Massachusetts. He was in favor of the latter, and said he doubted not it would be easy to make a discrimination in the relative qualities of the lands. This difference in price may render it worth while for the commissioners to have the land of a particular district explored. He replied to the objection from the want of integrity in the surveyors. Admitting the full force of the objection, it was probable that the United States would gain by it; at any rate they would not lose; and it was more probable that, to avoid suspicion, if the surveyors should be interested in the tracts surveyed, they would give more than 30 cents. With respect to foreigners, after they arrive in the country, they then will be on the same footing with our own citizens. He adverted to the mode which had been adopted by New-York—they had sold lands in every way, at a certain price, at auction, and are now selling them at the discretion of commissioners, at a rate not below a certain sum.

Mr. Stone objected to the mode of leaving the price unfixed, as it would involve a complex system, subjecting the purchasers to great inconvenience, perplexity and uncertainty. He reprobated the system adopted by New-York, and asked the gentleman (Mr. Lawrence) whether New-York had not been subjected to great loss and vexation in consequence of the plan they had pursued? He wished the system of New-York should be fully understood, in order that the United States may avoid it. He concluded by saying that he was in favor of fixing a price, and supposed that the Western Territory, sold at 30 cents per acre, would sink the whole of the national debt.

Mr. Lawrence replied to Mr. Stone: He said that when the state of New-York sold their lands at a fixed price, there had been complaints on account of the best tracts being taken up. When they had sold them at auction, the value of the lands had been generally realized in proportion to the quality. With respect to the last mode adopted, the result was not yet known.

Mr. White said, if the gentleman had proposed the amendment to the clause which respects large purchases, he should not have objected to it. He however objected to it in the present case; and, in order to shew that a fixed price was most eligible for small quantities, he instanced the practice of Lord Fairfax, who had been a great proprietor in Virginia—and also the practice of the first proprietors of Pennsylvania: These sold their lands, good and bad, at one price—their experience for such a length of time, near a century, he thought sufficient to shew that mode to be most eligible. He would not object to affixing that condition to special contracts.

Mr. Sedgwick obviated the objection in the first instance, by saying that the officers will be able to determine with very considerable precision, what will be for the interest of the United States. He said experience had proved that there were no insuperable difficulties in the case.

Mr. Moore observed, that the actual value of the best lands in that territory was about 30 cents per acre: When all of that description is sold, the next will bring the same price; from whence he inferred, that there could be no difficulty or loss attending fixing the price. He stated some difficulties which would result from adopting the mode proposed.

Mr. Sherman observed, that the committee was now only settling principles. The principal objection to the idea of leaving the price discretionary, appeared to arise from the difficulty of carrying it into execution.—He endeavored to obviate the difficulties. He said there was undoubtedly a great difference in the value of the lands: He had been informed by a surveyor that some of those lands are worth a guinea per acre. He doubted not that such information may be obtained by the surveyors as that a very great saving may be made to the United States.

Mr. Bloodworth said he was in sentiment with the gentleman last speaking from Virginia. His experience in the state of North Carolina was entirely in favor of fixing a price.

Mr. Sedgwick's motion being put, was lost.

Mr. Scot then moved that the clause which makes a discrimination in the securities to be paid for the land, should be struck out. His idea

was that all the securities should be received at their face for the land: He said this he considered as the only apology which the United States could make to their creditors, for not paying them 6 per cent. on the whole of their demand.

Mr. Fitzsimons objected to the motion: He said it would be reducing the price of the land to one half the sum already agreed to.

Mr. Lawrence preferred to Mr. Scot's motion striking out all that relates to public securities, and making gold and silver only a tender for the land.

Mr. Sedgwick was in favor of the article as in the report: He enlarged on the importance of sinking the public securities, and making provision for extinguishing the deferred stock in a particular manner.

Mr. Scot's motion was negatived.

Mr. Lawrence then proposed that public securities should be struck out. The gold and silver said he, received for the land, may be appropriated to sinking the debt, agreeable to the provision already made for appropriating the surplus revenue.

Mr. Jackson objected to the motion; he observed that the lands in the Western Territory had always been considered as a fund for sinking great part of the public debt of the union; he wished not to lose sight of this object—many persons have securities in their possession, who may be disposed to apply them to the purchase of lands; those persons may not find it convenient to turn their paper into gold and silver, and I see no necessity, said he, for this round about process—a more simple method is to be preferred. As the gentleman last speaking had thought proper to allude to the act passed the last session, making provision for the reduction of the public debt, he beg'd leave to offer a few remarks on that subject: It is true said he, we appropriated a surplus revenue of one million of dollars, to be applied to purchasing the public debt in the market, while at a reduced price; but what is the result? By the report of the commissioners it appears that only 200,000 dollars of the debt have been bought; the securities have risen, and one description of them is nearly up to par; why the whole sum has not been applied to make purchases when the price was low, I am not able to say—but the benefit to the public derived from the measure is so trifling, that it suggests a sufficient reason to my mind for not agreeing to appropriate any more money in that way.

Mr. Lawrence, in answer to Mr. Jackson, observed that it is true the sum of one million of surplus revenue was appropriated as a sinking fund the last session; but it was well known that that sum was not then in the treasury, nor was the whole expected to be realized till towards the close of the year; this would account for the whole amount's not being appropriated. With respect to the proceedings of the commissioners, he was not so fully informed as to give the committee full information on the subject; but doubted not that their transactions would be found to be perfectly conformable to the spirit and meaning of the law under which they acted.

The motion for striking out public securities was lost.

M O N D A Y, Jan. 3.

The bill for the relief of Shubael Swaine was read the second time, and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

Mr. Hathorne presented the petition of William Reynolds, a soldier of the late army, wounded at the attack on Fort Montgomery, praying to be placed on the pension list.

Mr. Fitzsimons presented the petition of Joseph Huck.—The above petitions were referred to the Secretary of War.

A message was received from the President of the United States, by Mr. Secretary Lear, with the copy of an act of the legislature of New-Jersey, ceding to the United States the lot of ground at Sandy Hook, on which the light-house is erected.

The House then took in consideration the report of the committee of the whole house, on the report of the Secretary of the Treasury relative to the establishment of land-offices, for the sale of lands in the Western Territory.—The Speaker read the report. The first resolution provides for the establishment of a general land-office, at the seat of government. The second, for two subordinate land-offices in the Western Territory—One to the South—the other to the North West of the Ohio. The third, that all sales above acres shall be negotiated at the general land-office. Fourth, Indian titles to be extinguished previous to any sale. These resolutions were adopted by the house, without a division. The fifth resolution provides that convenient locations shall be set off for actual settlers.—This resolution on motion of Mr. Scot was struck out. He proposed a substitute, which after some debate was disagreed to. The sixth resolution provides, that the seven ranges already laid out shall be surveyed and sold. This was adopted. The seventh, that any quantities within natural boundaries, or lines, or both,