

H. OF R.]

Answer to the President.

[MAY 5, 1789.]

States and other Powers who are not in treaty with her, and therefore did not call upon us for retaliation; if we are treated in the same manner as those nations we have no right to complain. He was not opposed to particular regulations to obtain the object which the friends of the measure had in view; but he did not like this mode of doing it, because he feared it would injure the interest of the United States.

Before the House adjourned, Mr. MADISON gave notice, that he intended to bring on the subject of amendments to the constitution, on the 4th Monday of this month.

TUESDAY, May 5.

Mr. BENSON, from the committee appointed to consider of, and report what style or titles it will be proper to annex to the office of President and Vice President of the United States, if any other than those given in the Constitution, and to confer with a committee of the Senate appointed for the same purpose, reported as followeth:

"That it is not proper to annex any style or title to the respective styles or titles of office expressed in the Constitution."

And the said report being twice read at the Clerk's table, was, on the question put thereupon, agreed to by the House.

Ordered, That the Clerk of this House do acquaint the Senate therewith.

Mr. MADISON, from the committee appointed to prepare an address on the part of this House to the President of the United States, in answer to his speech to both Houses of Congress, reported as followeth:

The Address of the House of Representatives to George Washington, President of the United States.

SIR: The Representatives of the People of the United States present their congratulations on the event by which your fellow-citizens have attested the pre-eminence of your merit. You have long held the first place in their esteem. You have often received tokens of their affection. You now possess the only proof that remained of their gratitude for your services, of their reverence for your wisdom, and of their confidence in your virtues. You enjoy the highest, because the truest honor, of being the First Magistrate, by the unanimous choice of the freest people on the face of the earth.

We well know the anxieties with which you must have obeyed a summons from the repose reserved for your declining years, into public scenes, of which you had taken your leave for ever. But the obedience was due to the occasion. It is already applauded by the universal joy which welcomes you to your station. And we cannot doubt that it will be rewarded with all the satisfaction with which an ardent love for your fellow citizens must review successful efforts to promote their happiness.

This anticipation is not justified merely by the past experience of your signal services. It is particularly suggested by the pious impressions under which you mean to commence your administration, and the enlightened maxims by which you mean to conduct it. We feel with you the strongest obligations to adore the invisible hand which has led the American peo-

ple through so many difficulties, to cherish a conscious responsibility for the destiny of republican liberty; and to seek the only sure means of preserving and recommending the precious deposit in a system of legislation founded on the principles of an honest policy, and directed by the spirit of a diffusive patriotism.

The question arising out of the fifth article of the Constitution will receive all the attention demanded by its importance; and will, we trust, be decided, under the influence of all the considerations to which you allude.

In forming the pecuniary provisions for the Executive Department, we shall not lose sight of a wish resulting from motives which give it a peculiar claim to our regard. Your resolution, in a moment critical to the liberties of your country, to renounce all personal emolument, was among the many presages of your patriotic services, which have been amply fulfilled; and your scrupulous adherence now to the law then imposed on yourself, cannot fail to demonstrate the purity, whilst it increases the lustre of a character which has so many titles to admiration.

Such are the sentiments which we have thought fit to address to you. They flow from our own hearts, and we verily believe that, among the millions we represent, there is not a virtuous citizen whose heart will disown them.

All that remains is, that we join in your fervent supplications for the blessings of heaven on our country; and that we add our own for the choicest of these blessings on the most beloved of our citizens.

Said address was committed to a Committee of the whole; and the House immediately resolved itself into a committee, Mr. PAGE in the chair. The committee proposing no amendment thereto, rose and reported the address, and the House agreed to it, and resolved that the Speaker, attended by the members of this House, do present the said address to the President.

Ordered, That Messrs. SINNICKSON, COLES, and SMITH, (of South Carolina,) be a committee to wait on the President, to know when it will be convenient for him to receive the same.

Mr. CLYMER, from the committee appointed for the purpose, reported a bill for laying a duty on goods, wares, and merchandise, imported into the United States, which passed its first reading.

Mr. BLAND presented to the House the following application from the Legislature of Virginia, to wit:

VIRGINIA, to wit:

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, Nov. 14, 1788.

Resolved, That an application be made in the name and on behalf of the Legislature of this Commonwealth to the Congress of the United States, in the words following, to wit:

"The good People of this Commonwealth, in Convention assembled, having ratified the Constitution submitted to their consideration, this Legislature has, in conformity to that act, and the resolutions of the United States in Congress assembled, to them transmitted, thought proper to make the arrangements that were necessary for carrying it into effect. Having thus shown themselves obedient to the voice of their constituents, all America will find that, so far as

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Application of Virginia.

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it depended on them, that plan of Government will be carried into immediate operation.

"But the sense of the People of Virginia would be but in part complied with, and but little regarded, if we went no farther. In the very moment of adoption, and coeval with the ratification of the new plan of Government, the general voice of the Convention of this State pointed to objects no less interesting to the People we represent; and equally entitled to our attention. At the same time that, from motives of affection to our sister States, the Convention yielded their assent to the ratification, they gave the most unequivocal proofs that they dreaded its operation under the present form.

"In acceding to the Government under this impression, painful must have been the prospect, had they not derived consolation from a full expectation of its imperfections being speedily amended. In this resource, therefore, they placed their confidence, a confidence that will continue to support them, whilst they have reason to believe that they have not calculated upon it in vain.

"In making known to you the objections of the People of this Commonwealth to the new plan of Government, we deem it unnecessary to enter into a particular detail of its defects, which they consider as involving all the great and unalienable rights of freemen. For their sense on this subject, we beg leave to refer you to the proceedings of their late Convention, and the sense of the House of Delegates, as expressed in their resolutions of the thirtieth day of October, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight.

"We think proper, however, to declare, that, in our opinion, as those objections were not founded in speculative theory, but deduced from principles which have been established by the melancholy example of other nations in different ages, so they will never be removed, until the cause itself shall cease to exist. The sooner, therefore, the public apprehensions are quieted, and the Government is possessed of the confidence of the People, the more salutary will be its operations, and the longer its duration.

"The cause of amendments we consider as a common cause; and, since concessions have been made from political motives, which, we conceive, may endanger the Republic, we trust that a commendable zeal will be shown for obtaining those provisions, which experience has taught us are necessary to secure from danger the unalienable rights of human nature.

"The anxiety with which our countrymen press for the accomplishment of this important end, will ill admit of delay. The slow forms of Congressional discussion and recommendation, if, indeed, they should ever agree to any change, would, we fear, be less certain of success. Happily for their wishes, the Constitution hath presented an alternative, by admitting the submission to a convention of the States. To this, therefore, we resort as the source from whence they are to derive relief from their present apprehensions.

"We do, therefore, in behalf of our constituents, in the most earnest and solemn manner, make this application to Congress, that a convention be immediately called, of deputies from the several States, with full power to take into their consideration the defects of this constitution that have been suggested by the State Conventions, and report such amendments thereto as they shall find best suited to pro-

mote our common interests, and secure to ourselves and our latest posterity the great and unalienable rights of mankind.

"JOHN JONES, *Speaker Senate.*

"THOMAS MATHEWS, *Speaker Ho. Del.*"

After the reading of this application,

Mr. BLAND moved to refer it to the Committee of the whole on the state of the Union.

Mr. BOUDINOT.—According to the terms of the Constitution, the business cannot be taken up until a certain number of States have concurred in similar applications; certainly the House is disposed to pay a proper attention to the application of so respectable a State as Virginia, but if it is a business which we cannot interfere with in a constitutional manner, we had better let it remain on the files of the House until the proper number of applications come forward.

Mr. BLAND thought there could be no impropriety in referring any subject to a committee, but surely this deserved the serious and solemn consideration of Congress. He hoped no gentleman would oppose the compliment of referring it to a Committee of the whole; beside, it would be a guide to the deliberations of the committee on the subject of amendments, which would shortly come before the House.

Mr. MADISON said, he had no doubt but the House was inclined to treat the present application with respect, but he doubted the propriety of committing it, because it would seem to imply that the House had a right to deliberate upon the subject. This he believed was not the case until two-thirds of the State Legislatures concurred in such application, and then it is out of the power of Congress to decline complying, the words of the Constitution being express and positive relative to the agency Congress may have in case of applications of this nature. "The Congress, wherever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to this Constitution; or, on the application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments." From hence it must appear, that Congress have no deliberative power on this occasion. The most respectful and constitutional mode of performing our duty will be, to let it be entered on the minutes, and remain upon the files of the House until similar applications come to hand from two-thirds of the States.

Mr. BOUDINOT hoped the gentleman who desired the commitment of the application would not suppose him wanting in respect to the State of Virginia. He entertained the most profound respect for her—but it was on a principle of respect to order and propriety that he opposed the commitment; enough had been said to convince gentlemen that it was improper to commit—for what purpose can it be done? what can the committee report? The application is to call a new convention. Now, in this case, there is nothing left for us to do, but to call one when two-thirds of the State Legislatures ap-

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ply for that purpose. He hoped the gentleman would withdraw his motion for commitment.

Mr. BLAND.—The application now before the committee contains a number of reasons why it is necessary to call a convention. By the fifth article of the Constitution, Congress are obliged to order this convention when two-thirds of the Legislatures apply for it; but how can these reasons be properly weighed, unless it be done in committee? Therefore, I hope the House will agree to refer it.

Mr. HUNTINGTON thought it proper to let the application remain on the table, it can be called up with others when enough are presented to make two-thirds of the whole States. There would be an evident impropriety in committing, because it would argue a right in the House to deliberate, and, consequently, a power to procrastinate the measure applied for.

Mr. TUCKER thought it not right to disregard the application of any State, and inferred, that the House had a right to consider every application that was made; if two-thirds had not applied, the subject might be taken into consideration, but if two-thirds had applied, it precluded deliberation on the part of the House. He hoped the present application would be properly noticed.

Mr. GERRY.—The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MADISON) told us yesterday, that he meant to move the consideration of amendments on the fourth Monday of this month; he did not make such motion then, and may be prevented by accident, or some other cause, from carrying his intention into execution when the time he mentioned shall arrive. I think the subject however is introduced to the House, and, perhaps, it may consist with order to let the present application lie on the table until the business is taken up generally.

Mr. PAGE thought it the best way to enter the application at large upon the Journals, and do the same by all that came in, until sufficient were made to obtain their object, and let the original be deposited in the archives of Congress. He deemed this the proper mode of disposing of it, and what is in itself proper can never be construed into disrespect.

Mr. BLAND acquiesced in this disposal of the application. Whereupon, it was ordered to be entered at length on the Journals, and the original to be placed on the files of Congress.

DUTIES ON TONNAGE.

The House then resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee of the whole on the state of the Union, in relation to the duty on tonnage.

Mr. JACKSON (from Georgia) moved to lower the tonnage duty from thirty cents, as it stood in the report of the committee on ships of nations in alliance, and to insert twenty cents, with a view of reducing the tonnage on the vessels of Powers not in alliance. In laying a higher duty on foreign tonnage than on our own, I presume, said he, the Legislature have

three things in contemplation: first, The encouragement of American shipping; 2ndly, Raising a Revenue; and, 3dly, The support of light-houses and beacons for the purposes of navigation. Now, for the first object, namely, the encouragement of American shipping, I judge twenty cents will be sufficient, the duty on our own being only six cents; but if twenty cents are laid in this case, I conclude that a higher rate will be imposed upon the vessels of nations not in alliance. As these form the principal part of the foreign navigation, the duty will be adequate to the end proposed. I take it, the idea of revenue from this source is not much relied upon by the House; and surely twenty cents is enough to answer all the purposes of erecting and supporting the necessary light-houses. On a calculation of what will be paid in Georgia, I find a sufficiency for these purposes; and I make no doubt but enough will be collected in every State from this duty. The tonnage employed in Georgia is about twenty thousand tons, fourteen thousand tons are foreign; the duty on this quantity will amount to £466 13s. 4d. Georgia currency. I do not take in the six cents upon American vessels, yet this sum appears to be as much as can possibly be wanted for the purpose of improving our navigation.

When we begin a new system, we ought to act with moderation; the necessity and propriety of every measure ought to appear evident to our constituents, to prevent clamor and complaint. I need not insist upon the truth of this observation by offering arguments in its support. Gentlemen see we are scarcely warm in our seats, before applications are made for amendments to the Constitution; the people are afraid that Congress will exercise their power to oppress them. If we shackle the commerce of America by heavy imposition, we shall rivet them in their distrust. The question before the committee appears to me to be, whether we shall draw in, by tender means, the States that are now out of the Union, or deter them from joining us, by holding out the iron hand of tyranny and oppression. I am for the former, as the most likely way of perpetuating the federal Government. North Carolina will be materially affected by a high tonnage; her vessels in the lumber trade will be considerably injured by the regulation; she will discover this, and examine the advantages and disadvantages of entering into the Union. If the disadvantages preponderate, it may be the cause of her throwing herself into the arms of Britain; her peculiar situation will enable her to injure the trade of both South Carolina and Georgia. The disadvantages of a high tonnage duty on foreign vessels are not so sensibly felt by the Northern States; they have nearly vessels enough of their own to carry on all their trade, consequently the loss sustained by them will be but small; but the Southern States employ mostly foreign shipping, and unless their produce is carried by them to market it will perish. At this mo-