

that he would be pleased to furnish it with copies of his correspondence, since the 4th of March last, with officers of the Federal Government. As the House will remember, his Excellency was respectfully requested in its last order of June 5th, to communicate his reasons for withholding such correspondence, should he decline to transmit it. His response is as follows; neither more nor less:

“I have already furnished your honorable body with copies of all correspondence between myself and officers of the general government which I deem it necessary to lay before you.” The Committee are compelled to presume, that in his elevated and honorable position, rendering doubly obligatory, in official intercourse, the observance of those courtesies which are an instinct among private gentlemen, his Excellency could not have so far forgotten himself, as to have used the curt language which has been quoted, with any purpose of intentional disrespect. They therefore pass, without further comment, to a consideration of the substance of the message.

The 28th section of the III. Article of the Constitution expressly provides, that the House of Delegates “may call for all public or official papers and records, and send for persons whom they may judge necessary, in the course of their enquiries concerning affairs relating to the public interest.” If, in response to such a call, the Governor or any other public officer can set up his judgment, as to the propriety of the requisition, against the judgment of the House, and can refuse to obey the call, because he does not “deem it necessary” to furnish, what the House “may judge necessary” to demand, it is quite obvious that the constitutional provision just quoted is a nullity, and the powers of the House, as “the grand inquest of the State,” are altogether at an end. This honorable body cannot, of course, tolerate, from any quarter, so manifest an insubordination to its plain constitutional authority, and the undersigned accordingly recommend the appointment of a special committee to inspect the Executive records in the custody of the Secretary of State, or elsewhere, with power to institute such enquiries, and send for such persons and papers, as may be necessary, to place the House in possession of all needful information, in regard to the official relations between the general government and the Executive of the State since the 4th of March last, or since the commencement of our unhappy national troubles. The undersigned assume, from the tenor of the Governor’s message, that such correspondence as this House has enquired for, has in fact taken place. Were it otherwise, his Excellency would of course have so stated, and would not have intimated the