

bours crowned with success, and the independence of America established on the surest foundation. On an event so interesting and important, and so gloriously achieved by the valour and patriotism of our citizens, we beg leave to offer you our warmest congratulations.

Whether at so early a period of the pacification, it may be proper to proceed on the business of the treaty, we will not presume to say; but we are fully persuaded, that whenever the subject is taken up, it will be considered with the most serious attention; and that your measures will be dictated by the most enlightened policy, and distinguished by a firm resolution to maintain a fair national character.

The patient sufferings of our army at different stages of the war, their patriotic exertions and gallant achievements under every circumstance of difficulty and danger, give them an unquestionable claim to every public notice and regard; and when it is considered how much we are indebted to them for the liberty and independence of America, the principles of gratitude and justice cannot fail to produce the most speedy and animated efforts to make them a generous compensation for their great and important services.

The public creditors of every class are entitled to your earliest notice. It is a humiliating truth, that in this glorious contest for the dearest rights of mankind, our national character has been sullied by repeated violations of the public faith. We flatter ourselves, that the proceedings of this session will be honourably distinguished, by a zealous attention to public engagements, and demonstrate that it is your fixed determination to restore to government its best resource, the confidence of the people.

It is with concern we are obliged to speak of the wants and demands of government. By the act of November session 1781, to raise the supplies for 1782, the whole specific tax was appropriated, in the first instance, for the payment of one year's interest on adjusted certificates; and by the same act a large sum of money was appropriated for necessitous creditors, to be raised by the sale of specifics then on hand. By an act of October session 1778, the orphans courts are directed to provide for disabled soldiers by draughts on the treasury, and by a resolve of congress, soldiers unfit for duty, discharged from the service, are entitled to five dollars per month for life, in lieu of rations and all other demands. By a resolution passed at the close of the last session, specifics were ordered to be sold to pay off the arrearages of the barge equipment, amounting nearly to twelve hundred pounds; and by an act of the same session, the civil list was directed to be paid off in quarterly payments. Great and pressing as these demands are, the whole amount of monies lodged in the treasury for upwards of six months past, to be applied in discharging them, do not exceed five hundred pounds; and we humbly submit to the consideration of the general assembly, whether it would not more become the justice, honour, and dignity of government, to direct an immediate sale of specifics on hand, and with the monies pay the public demand, than to retain, merely in hopes of a rising market, a large quantity of wheat, and upwards of one thousand hogheads of tobacco, when, in the mean time, the demands of government are uncomplished with, the public claims unpaid, creditors disappointed, chagrined, and every day obliged to sustain additional wrong and injury; the solemn engagements of the legislature ~~not~~ its public faith brought into question, and your executive reduced to the most humiliating condition, and exposed to the most mortifying animadversions and censures.

We take the liberty of recommending a revision, as early as possible, of our criminal law: Nothing can be of more consequence to government, than that the laws affecting the lives of its citizens should be reduced to the utmost certainty, and that punishments be regulated by the degrees of criminality: And we beg leave to suggest, as the most effectual means to obtain a well digested system, to commit this business into the hands of a select number of eminent gentlemen, of the law.

The importance of trade and commerce to a country is so universally understood and acknowledged, that no arguments need be offered to shew they are objects which call for every public encouragement. Peace opens to us the most extended prospects, and the task is yours, to seize the present opportunity, of making such commercial improvements, as may lay a permanent foundation to make this a great, happy, and flourishing country. The act of assembly which relates to our shipping and registers requires an immediate change and amendment.

It is far from our intentions to embarrass your deliberations with a variety of objects, but we cannot pass over matters of so high concernment as religion and learning. The sufferings of the ministers of the Gospel of all denominations, during the war, have been very considerable; and the perseverance and firmness of those, who discharged their sacred functions under many discouraging circumstances, claim our acknowledgments and thanks. The Bill of Rights and Form of Government recognise the principle of public support for the ministers of the Gospel, and ascertain the mode. Anxiously solicitous for the blessings of government, and the welfare and happiness of our citizens, and thoroughly convinced of the powerful influence of religion, when diffused by its respectable teachers, we beg leave most seriously and warmly to recommend, among the first objects of your attention on the return of peace, the making such a provision as the constitution in this case authorises and approves.

The