

BY THE SENATE, JANUARY 20, 1799.

GENTLEMEN,

THE sentiments of the senate, in relation to the provisions to be contained in a district law, have been communicated to you in repeated messages; they were the result of mature deliberation.

It is matter of serious concern to reflect upon the abuses that now arise from the want of some written evidence of the qualification of voters. The present practice of persons establishing their right to suffrage by their own oaths, holds out the strongest temptation to the practice of vice and immorality, and experience fully proves its pernicious consequences. We do not propose any alteration as to the amount of property necessary to qualify a voter. We only insist that there shall be proper evidence of the quantum required by the constitution, which we think one of the best supports of a republican government.

To enforce the constitution now established upon this subject, and to prevent the too frequent sportings with the solemnity of an oath, is our object.

We lament that you do not agree with us as to the existence of those abuses, or that you should not think yourselves at liberty to correct them. Pursuing the dictates of our own judgments and consciences, however anxious we may be for a district law, we have determined not to reconsider the bill, entitled, An act to confirm an act passed at November session, seventeen hundred and ninety-seven, entitled, An act to alter, abolish and repeal, such parts of the second, third, fourteenth and forty-second sections of the constitution and form of government, as relate to the judges, time, place and manner, of holding the several elections therein specified, and the bill, entitled, An act to regulate elections, as requested by you.

At this late period of the session, when there is no prospect of an agreement between the two branches, we court not further discussion. But as the establishment of a district system is of primary importance, we doubted not but you would have passed the bill, entitled, An act to alter, abolish and repeal, such parts of the constitution and form of government of this state as are therein mentioned, and originated in the senate during this session, or would yourselves have originated another bill, repealing such parts of the constitution as you may conceive incompatible with district elections. This would enable a succeeding legislature to repeal such parts of the constitution, and to enact laws upon the subject.

We have too much confidence in the good sense and virtue of a great majority of the citizens of this state, to doubt their approbation of provisions evidently calculated to do away a practice destructive of the morals of the state. We herewith return you the bill, entitled, An act to alter, abolish and repeal, such parts of the constitution and form of government of this state as are therein mentioned, and hope you will reconsider the same.

By order,

A. VAN-HORN, clk.

Which was read.

RESOLVED, That the examiner-general of the western shore be entitled to charge twenty-five per cent. on the fees allowed by law for services performed in his office during the present year.

Sent to the senate by the clerk.

The clerk of the senate delivers the resolution in favour of Sarah Weems Allein, endorsed; "By the senate, January 20, 1799: Read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

"By order,

A. VAN-HORN, clk.

"By the senate, January 20, 1799: Read the second time by especial order and dissented from.

"By order,

A. VAN-HORN, clk."

The following message being prepared, was read, agreed to, and sent to the senate by the clerk.

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, JANUARY 20, 1799.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE,

YOUR message respecting the advance of money to the governor, is a novelty in the history of communication between the two houses—It was totally unnecessary, as a simple assent, endorsed on the back of the resolution, is all that is practised on such occasions. Your departure from the custom, whatever the intention was, has the effect of censure on the conduct of the late governor. Why the senate should travel out of the usual routine of business, when the effect is no other than what is just mentioned, appears to us astonishing. No account was required by the resolution appropriating money last session, and that the whole sum was not drawn, must be, to every unimpassioned mind, abundant evidence of the proper disposition of the portion which has been expended. If the most zealous, faithful and unremitted services, continued through an ordinary life-time, cannot protect the memory of persons who have been thus engaged, we must bid adieu to disinterested love of country, and the senate will have the honour of making an attack, which will destroy every inducement to patriotism, and the best reward which faithful services to our country can lay claim to, the approbation of our fellow-citizens.

By order,

W. HARWOOD, clk.

The house adjourns till 5 o'clock.

P O S T M E R I D I E M.

The house met.

RESOLVED, That the agent to the state of Maryland do immediately proceed to sell the property taken under fieri facias issued on a judgment, the state of Maryland against William Allein, rendered at October term, seventeen hundred and ninety-two, and that the amount of the proceeds thereof be paid by the agent to Daniel Kent, for the use of Sarah Weems Allein, wife of William Allein.

Sent to the senate by the clerk.