

We have returned with our negative the bill, entitled an act for the payment of the journal of accounts ; the low state of the treasury, and the certainty of very great and speedy demands thereon, for effecting the several matters ordered in the course of this session, have induced us *to defer the payment of the journal, to a time when the money can be taken from the treasury with less detriment to the public.* We are willing to concur with a resolve for paying the clerks and other officers of the two Houses, the sums respectively due to them on the journal." This proposition was at once assented to, and a resolution to that effect was brought in and passed both Houses. This resolution furnishes a most refreshing instance of the lofty, disinterested patriotism of the revolutionary legislators of Maryland. But those were times of peculiar emergency and distress. And this resolution shows how deeply the public exigencies were felt, when legislators themselves found it necessary to set an example of the retrenchment and economy they enjoined, by abandoning *their own compensation*, while every other officer was paid to the full extent to which the acts of the State had induced him to expect to receive.

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In order to do justice to the public creditors of the State and to prevent their suffering any loss by depreciation of our paper money, it was moreover enacted and declared, that in the payment of the public debts evidenced by the various kinds of certificates for money lent, services performed, property purchased, or taken, &c., adopting the scale prescribed by Congress so far as it went, all such certificates of public debt should be paid according to the following scale of depreciation ; that is to say, in 1778 from the first of March one and three-quarters, from the first of September four ; in 1779 from the first of March ten, from the first of September eighteen ; in 1780 from the 18th of March forty ; and after that day as in the abovementioned scale. (*Jour. Cong. 28th June, 1780 ; May 1781, ch. 17, s. 2.*) The purchase money of confiscated property and the taxes were, nevertheless, in some cases and in some proportions received in bills of credit and certificates at their nominal value.—(*October 1780, ch. 38, s. 11 ; May 1781, ch. 20, 25, 36 and 37, &c.*)

These legally established scales of depreciation it must, however, be recollected, relate only to claims against the State ; as to private contracts and debts due from one citizen to another, the proper allowance for depreciation seems to have been considered as a fact to be adjusted in each case by the court of justice before which the case was brought, (*Chapline v. Scott, 4 H. & McH. 94.*) The American army in these years was not only deficient in clothing, but in food. The seasons both in 1779 and 1780, were unfavourable to the crops. The labours of the farmers had often been interrupted by calls for militia duty. The current paper money was so depreciated as to be deemed no equivalent for the productions of the soil. (*Ram. L. Washington, ch. 6 & 8.*) From this state of things it is evident, that the community must have suffered great injustice ; and that the public finances being totally deranged, all the operations of the government connected with this subject must have been very much impeded and perplexed.—(*Message from the Senate, Votes & Pro. H. Del. 10th May 1780 ; Hoye v. Penn, ante 41, note.*)