

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, MARCH 29, 1787.

AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND.

I N all countries, and particularly in those which enjoy the greatest share of freedom, the people are too apt to murmur at the burthens, necessarily imposed for the support of government.—They would enjoy its blessings, free from cost, care, or contributions of any kind.—Indeed, amidst the tranquillity of a well ordered government, whilst no violence disturbs their repose, and even no disposition is discovered to invade their property, endanger their lives, or deprive them of personal liberty, they are scarcely sensible, that they owe this to the energy of wise laws, faithfully administered—hence it is, that they look with a malignant eye on the rulers, or servants, to whom is intrusted the preservation of their rights.

To the man, who now considers himself under an obligation to address you in his real name, it ever appeared, that the connection between the governing and the governed, ought to be no less endearing than that tie which binds together parents and children—he can truly say, that a desire of promoting the happiness of his fellow-citizens is one of his ruling passions, and he laments, that some of them most injuriously have represented him as unfriendly to the cause of freedom.

The perpetual clamours against the civil list have proceeded, in some, from ignorance, in others, from want of reflection, in too many, from envy and malice.—They are encouraged by certain candidates for popular favour, who state the heavy expences of government as arising from profuse allowances to its officers.—The people have hitherto been deceived.—To set them right, in this particular, and to close up that path to popularity which has too long been trodden by the unworthy, is the main purpose of this address.—If aught in my character or conduct for nine years past has entitled me to your good opinion, you will not refuse me your candid and patient attention.

At the last session of the general assembly the following memorial was presented to the house of delegates:

To the honourable the HOUSE OF DELEGATES.
THE HUMBLE MEMORIAL, REMONSTRANCE, and PETITION, of ALEXANDER CONTEE HANSON, one of the judges of the general court

IF I have frequently appeared in the character of a petitioner to the general assembly, and if I address you at this late season, when you are disposed to enter upon no new business, your honours will, I trust, think my apology sufficient.—The framers of our excellent constitution have secured to every man the right of petitioning, whenever he shall think himself aggrieved; and the transaction, which has principally induced me to address you, has but just taken place.—Permit me to transcribe for your perusal, part of a memorial, presented to the last general assembly.—The lapse of a single year has not changed the nature of things, nor made those things improper for consideration, which were thought otherwise at the last session.

On the 23^d of December, 1777, I was appointed a judge of the general court.—It is unnecessary to state the exact sums of money, which, since that period, I have received for my services.—From the treasurer's books it would appear, that, for almost eight years, these sums have not, in value, exceeded the sum of £2,200 specie; which is about £25 per annum.

It is a proposition founded on common sense, that a man, whose time is engrossed by the public, or whose public engagements are incompatible with any other employment of profit, should be completely maintained according to his rank, at the public's expence.—Inadequate allowances have been sometimes voted, merely from want of calculation.—That your honours may better determine with respect to the salary of a judge, I solicit your attention to the following estimate:

An estimate of the annual expences of a family in Annapolis, consisting of ten persons (half of whom are servants) keeping two horses, and one milch cow.

Head rent,	£ 75 0 0
Pork, 1600 lb. at 17/6	30 0 0
Beef, and other butcher's meat, 1200 lb. at 6s	30 0 0
Poultry, fish, fruit, Vegetables	30 0 0
Tea, coffee, salt, spices, &c. &c.	25 0 0
Loaf sugar, 180 lb. at 12s	10 0 0
Brown do 120 lb. at 8s	5 0 0
Superfine flour, 10 barrels, at 40s	20 0 0
Indian corn, 20 barrels, at 15s	15 0 0
Oats, 180 bushels, at 3s	27 0 0

Hay, 2 tons, at £ 6,	12 0 0
Fire wood, 50 cords, at 20s, including the expence of carting, cording, &c.	50 0 0
Candles, 140 lb. at 15d,	8 15 0
Spirits, to represent table liquors of every kind, 30 gallons, at 6/8,	10 0 0
Wine of every kind, 50 gallons, at 12s,	30 0 0
Butter, 150 lb. at 15d,	9 7 6
Hire and cloathing of 5 servants,	60 0 0
Medicine, physicians, &c.	15 0 0
	£. 462 12 6

The cloathing of the family is not yet included, and for 5 persons, surely it cannot, at Annapolis, to appear decently, be less than

	£. 120 0 0
	£. 582 12 6
The expence of attending twice a year on the eastern shore, cannot fall short of	37 7 6
	£. 620 0 0

There is no allowance made for casualties, or for what is called pocket money.—These might raise the account to near £. 700.

It has been said, the office of a judge does not oblige him to reside at the capital;—but should he reside in any other town, his saving would, I conceive, be little.—Should he rent a farm with every necessary for carrying it on, being obliged for a great part of the year to be absent, being totally unacquainted with the business, he would probably find himself in a worse situation than before.—Should he rent a house in the country without a farm, this situation would be fully as expensive as a residence in town.

But the residence of at least one judge at Annapolis may be said to be absolutely necessary.—Of this point I am satisfied.—Had I not resided here, the people would have been clamorous for compelling one at least, if not all, to remain at the seat of government.—They have enjoyed the advantage of my voluntary residence, and yet no man appears to have thought me, on that account, entitled to the least consideration.

I think myself, however, to have been fully, fairly and honestly, entitled to as much as would support my small family at Annapolis, so long as I have remained in the practice of economy and frugality.—The above estimate, by no means, supposes a splendid, magnificent style of living.—It affords not equipage, costly entertainments, or sumptuous fare.—It provides a comfortable subsistence; but not, even that, without a strict attention to expenditures.

Your honours must perceive, that the sum of £ 2,200 has been extremely inadequate to the maintenance of my family for eight years.—The constitution has not confined the exercise of high offices to men of superior wealth.—It requires no qualification of property for the office of a judge.—His essential qualities are declared to be judgment and integrity; and to preserve his integrity, the constitution directs, that the public should render him independent.—But how has this injunction been obeyed? You cannot expect from a judge, on all trying occasions, that manly firmness, that elevation of soul, which must constitute the real guardian of your rights; you cannot even expect him, at all times, to resist the power of a bribe, or (what is more dangerous) the great weight of personal influence;—you cannot reasonably expect all this, until you shall be fully satisfied, that you have placed him above even the apprehension of want.—With your present judges, indeed, upon the old illiberal system, you would be safe.—But without an entire change in that system, you may be extremely unsafe in their successors.

To put the saving of a trifling sum in competition with an object so important as that of the uprightness of your judges, I presume, was never the wish of an enlightened legislature.—It is for this reason, that I give you such information, as I conceive necessary for carrying into effect your wise and liberal intentions.

Suppose the judges to depend for subsistence on the annual vote of the legislature.—Suppose the leaders of the popular branch to be practising attorneys, and animated by the insatiable ambition of making all men in the government subservient to their will and pleasure.—Suppose them to avow a determination, that every man shall either love or fear them.—Suppose all these things, for the sake of rendering judges independent.

I will now explicitly disclose to your honours my very ineligible situation.—The better part of all the small fortunes I have possessed, since my appointment, has been sold, by degrees, to defray my current expences.—The residue will do little more than discharge my debts.—Your honours will, I hope, reflect seriously on these circumstances.—My family would, at this moment, become beggars by my death.—It is too late to resort to a private employment.—The public has had the best of my life, and my countrymen have been pleased with my services.—My health has declined.—And, in every respect, I should resign my office with fewer advantages, than I possessed, when entering upon it.

I have faithfully, scrupulously and zealously, served the state, in every way, in which I conceived, I could render it material assistance.—I have never availed myself of my superior intelligence to speculate on the vices and follies of mankind.—Other men have done it, and are now rolling in riches.—From session to session, I have relied on the justice and good sense of my countrymen; and often have my friends remonstrated against this very precarious dependence.—In spite of every past disappointment, I still expect justice, so far, at least, as my attention to the circumstances of the state will permit me to request.

Thus far I have thought proper to transcribe from a former memorial.—The legislature took my case into consideration, and, although they did not grant the whole of my request, they passed a resolve, which was unanimously assented to by the senate, for paying me the sum of £. 725, on account of my superintending the publication of the laws.—They also passed an act (for the repeal of which, your honours have just passed a bill) to establish permanent salaries to the judges.

Under that act, I have received £. 500, and the whole amount of my receipts for nine years service, as a judge, is about £. 2,700.—As to the compensation voted me for superintending the publication of the laws, there is scarcely an attorney, who has succeeded at all in his profession, that has not made more, with less trouble than I have bestowed on this work. He may have done it too, with the exercise of no greater talents, than are requisite to produce a proper edition of the laws.

Although the house of delegates is of annual appointment, the legislature, on every principle of government, so long as the constitution endures, must be considered as the same body, and involuntarily bound by its engagements, whether contracted at the present session, the last session, or nine years ago.—Unless this principle be established, and unless your constituents are firmly persuaded, that it will advantage both you and your successors, it will be in vain to expect success to any scheme which depends on the confidence of the people.—I speak not with allusion to any particular measure or system.—I only mean to insist, that without adhering to this great leading principle, every government, under a republican form, must be weak and disreputable.

Permit me now to ask your honours, whether, in my nine years service, it was possible to accumulate savings from my allowance? Could I have foreseen the fluctuation of public councils, and the repeated infractions of public faith, and could I with this fore-knowledge have entered on my office, and continued in it until this period; no man ever made so unprofitable a use of his talents; no man was ever so false to himself, or regardless of a family, dear to him as his life.

It is no trifling occasion that could extort boastful expressions from your petitioner.—The present exigence must plead his excuse.—Your honours must all recollect characters; that would not greatly be offended at the comparison, who, by the practice of the law, have accumulated handsome fortunes, whilst your petitioner has been approaching by slow and certain steps, to his ruin.

It is said, that no office should be calculated to suit the man; and that, if the present set of officers should resign, there will be found men enough to supply their places.—The former position would be more just, if offices were just now about to be created, and if the public faith had never been pledged.—As to the latter, your petitioner is bold to say; if you drive him from his office, his equal in every respect will not be found, to serve for the highest salary he has ever enjoyed.—But when a man, for nine years together, from a fond reliance on public faith, often plighted, and as often disregarded, has been induced, to waste the prime of his years, before the legislature has thought proper to obey the injunctions of the constitution, and when, after that, he receives the most unequivocal proof, that any longer confidence in the public would render his condition