

We are aware that the authority over this subject, asserted by the general assembly to be constitutionally vested in congress, is denied and strenuously contested, by many distinguished statesmen of the day; who entertain the opinion that the power cannot be exercised without a violation of the rights of the states. With all the respect for this opinion that a personal acquaintance with, and the fullest confidence in the ability, patriotism and integrity of, some of those who entertain it, is calculated to inspire, it appears to us, that the power has been too long exercised, and the practice of the government too uniform and firmly settled and sanctioned, both by congress and the people, now to be questioned.

Government ought to be administered upon fixed principles. The good of the country as well as prudence, require that there should be a period when disputed questions, after repeated and thorough investigation, should be put to rest; and we are not without example and high authority for this assertion. That the right of the general government to exercise the power mentioned in the resolution, has been fully, and ably discussed on various occasions, in congress, and decided in its favour, is undeniable.

The national government possesses the power to tax the people to any extent; and shall it be contended, that after having exhausted the resources of the states, (for every object of taxation is within its reach, and many withheld from them,) that it does not possess the power to apply any portion of those resources to the amelioration of their condition, or the promotion of the prosperity of the country, by means of internal improvements?

We yield to no one in respect for, or attachment to, the rights and sovereignty of the states, but we do not feel the alarm nor perceive the danger which is apprehended by some, from the exercise of the power in question. It appears to us, that the states possess ample security against any violation of their rights, in the *direct* responsibility, which one branch of congress owe to them, and the local attachments and feelings of the representatives of the people in the other branch.

The great error attending the investigation of the powers bestowed by the constitution on the national government, and what has given rise to a fastidious opposition to the beneficial exercise of some of those powers, is, that it has been viewed as a foreign, distinct and separate government. Were we to look exclusively to the written constitutions of each, the conclusion would be a just one, but our whole system is anomalous—history furnishing nothing analogous to it. The same population constitutes the national government and the governments of the respective states: Hence the improbability that in the interpretation of the powers of the former, the rights of the latter should be overlooked or violated.

If the history of our country from the commencement of the revolutionary war to the present day, did not contradict the supposition of the power of any form of the general government, thus constituted, being exercised so as to oppress the respective states, is not the idea too preposterous to suppose that the representatives from the several states, in congress, should look with indifference upon the exercise of powers, by the general government, under the authority of that body, calculated to oppress the people of the respective states? Would they, as citizens of the United States and component parts of the national government, attempt to violate their rights, or oppress themselves, as citizens of the respective states?

In the event of a proposition being made in congress, calculated to bear heavily on their constituents, would not their feelings naturally revert to their immediate friends—their homes—and their firesides?

If under the authority, "to regulate commerce," light-houses may be built; sand bars and other obstructions removed, from the mouths and beds of rivers, and sea walls erected—if, in short, it be admitted, *that the works of nature may be at all changed*, with a view to promote and facilitate the operations of commerce, of war—how can it be denied, that, for the same purposes, roads may be graduated and turnpiked, or intervening