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of Flour and to export it for the Use of the French Marine which was
fully complied with and a Clause inserted in the Act passed in July 1779
to prohibit for a limited Time, the Exportation of Wheat, & Flour &c. enabling
the Gouvernor and Council to grant Licences on the Requisition of the Minister
Plenipotentiary of his most Christian Majesty, or the Agent of the Marine
of France to transport any of the Commodities mentioned therein, from
this State to any Port or Place out of the same: In pursuance whereof the
Gouvernor and Council did give Permission to the French Agent to buy
up a certain Quantity and limited Quantity of Flour and Wheat some
of which has been exported under Licence from us. The General Assembly
during their last Session, received Information, that various and great
Abuses had been committed, under the Permission aforesaid by the
Persons employed by the Agent of France and others pretending to act as
such, to the great Detriment of the United States and being solicitous
to restrain or defeat the pernicious Effect of such Conduct, enacted, that
all Purchases of Wheat or Flour made above the Quantity aforesaid,
should be deemed made for the Use of the United States. The Representa-
tion of his Excellency General Washington, of the alarming Situation of
the United States Army, received just before the close of the Session,
demonstrated the Necessity of making the most vigorous Efforts to
procure an immediate and full Supply of Flour and induced them to
make the Law from whence it is apprehended such Mischiefs will
result to our Ally. Your Excellency must be sensible the Distress which
occasioned the above Representation, was real, not fictitious, and we flatter
ourselves you will concur with us in Opinion that the using every Means
in the Power of the State to obtain an immediate and full Supply of
Provisions for our distressed Army is highly conducive to the reciprocal
Advantage of united America and her Ally, and could alone avert a Calamity
replete with Evils too numerous to be recapitulated, and of such Magnitude
as cannot but be discerned. The General Assembly could not hesitate about
the Expediency, indeed Necessity of employing their utmost Exertions to
afford Relief, and the Information communicated to them, that the French
Agents had purchased Wheat and Flour in this State, far exceeding the
Quantity permitted, rendered it the more necessary to make the Law general;
for the Exception of Wheat and Flour purchased by the Agents of France
might have frustrated the Law, by exempting that Surplus or Excess
of Quantity from Seizure: another Good we expect will result from the
Generality of the Law and a strict Execution of it; this State will be en-
abled to ascertain with Precision, the Surplus Wheat and Flour and detect
the Persons to whose collusive Practices, the Distresses of the Army may
be, in some Measure, if not wholly attributed. We are well convinced
that the primary and grand Object of the Legislature was, to procure
a full Supply for the Army, with the utmost Expedition and that every thing
else was to be subservient to it, and we trust such Conduct must correspond
with the Feelings of your Excellency and meet with your Approbation, though
it may interfere with your Plans of Operation; because it is better the Marine
of France should submit to a temporary Disappointment, than that we should
hazard the Disbanding of the Army of the United States, by procrastinating
the Supplies. We have instructed the Commissioners to observe the Directions
of the Law and to seize all the Wheat and Flour purchased by the French
Agent and to take a particular Account of it, and have directed them not
to transport or send forward such Flour, Wheat and Flour until they receive
our Instructions. As soon as we have Assurance from Congress