

Dr George W Richardson Esq  
of Henry General of Mo: &

State Department  
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Dr. Sir

Frequent application has been made to this Department for a construction of the Stamp Act, particularly in reference to obligations given in this State. Although I am aware that it is not the province of this Department to construe the Law, yet upon this subject, I feel anxious that the Community should before the Law takes effect have all the information which it is in my power to afford them; I have therefore to ask that you will examine the Stamp Act, and furnish me with your official opinion upon the cases, which I will now state.

Suppose A, a Merchant of Virginia to buy goods in Baltimore & to give his note for the purchase payable at a bank at Richmond could the note so taken, without a stamp, be enforced, in the Courts of Virginia. I suppose there can be no doubt, that a note so given could not be enforced in Maryland.

A considerable business is carried on between the District Cities and the adjoining Counties of this State. Suppose B, a Citizen of Maryland to buy goods in the District of Columbia and to give his note for the purchase; could such a note unstamped be enforced in the Maryland Courts?

The Citizens of the Counties adjoining the District, conduct their banking business, chiefly with the District Banks. Suppose a Citizen of Maryland to give his note which is drawn payable at a bank in the District and is discounted by the Bank; could such a note unstamped be enforced in our County Courts?

Suppose a Citizen of Maryland to have his Commission Merchant in Baltimore and to draw his draft at 6 months on such Merchant which draft is discounted by a Bank in the District; could such a draft if unstamped, be enforced in the Courts of this State, although the draft should be dated as if given in the District. I have investigated the questions I now propose to you but the propriety of making my views publicly known is questionable. I wish you therefore to consider this letter & your opinion confidential, until I have considered your opinion & determined to make it public.

I shall be in Maryland during the next week - Rev &c

Wm G. Pratt