

we believe the indiscriminate association would be equally disagreeable to the latter; and if we should at this time put those who have and those who have not deserved well of their country, in equal rank as to the enjoyment of all privileges, the citizens now and hereafter will be taught this lesson by the acts of government, that no particular advantage is to be gained or lost by a performance or neglect of duty; and thus one of the strongest motives of human actions will be taken from the scale, which every good and wise politician must wish should preponderate. We are not to learn from your information, that a right in the people to participate in the legislature is the basis of free government; but the exercise of this right in all well regulated societies is confined to those who are attached to the constitution; it is expressly so by our bill of rights; but your bill, instead of pursuing, opposes this principle, by giving those who have not attachment equal privileges with those who are well affected. If there is to be a departure from the bill of rights by enlarging the privilege of suffrage, there is a class of men who certainly have a preferable claim on our generosity to that of the nonjurors; we mean, those of the citizens who have not property to the amount of thirty pounds, among whom are many soldiers, to whose services we in a great measure are indebted for our present peace and independence. We are of opinion, that the act proposed to be repealed by your bill, so far as it prevents those who refused to avow their attachment to our government from a participation in the full enjoyment of its privileges, cannot be considered as too high an exercise of legislative power, nor can it be viewed in the light of an act to disfranchise a number of citizens, but must be taken by all who consider the subject as an execution of the principle laid down in the bill of rights, perfectly consistent with it, and, being so, deprived no person of rights which he could justly exercise before the passing of the act, the right of suffrage being confined to persons having attachment to the government; therefore no person not having such attachment could fairly exercise the right. The act for the better security of the government, only adopted a mode of discovering who were, and who were not, entitled to the exercise of the privilege under the bill of rights. We have no reason to suppose, that those of the peaceable industrious quakers and methodists, who did not take the oath of fidelity, are dissatisfied with their present situation in our mild government, where no unequal burthens are imposed, or discrimination made, in the administration of justice, and if they wish us well, they would be averse to receiving a privilege, which must be participated by others who might disturb our tranquillity; and though your proffered lenity might have an happy effect upon some of the nonjurors, yet we apprehend by many others it would be received without gratitude, and the power given by it exercised not with a view to the prosperity but the disturbance of the state. This house has no resentment to gratify, and you could scarcely suppose we were to be drawn into the disagreeable office of excepting particulars from a general act of grace. That there are men of candour and moderation among the nonjurors we admit, and that some of them may be well disposed to our constitution we will not deny; but we believe these men would not be induced to act with so much impropriety, as to take part in the administration of a government in time of peace, which they declined to support in time of war. If, however, application should be made by men, whose characters and conduct may entitle them to the interposition of the legislature, and they have the weight of your recommendation, we shall listen to their claims with impartiality, and determine on them with justice; this we conceive would be a much more eligible manner of separating the inoffensive from the mischievous, than the mode pointed out by you. Under your bill we believe the most dangerous and meddling would be introduced into the public affairs of the state, while the more modest, sensible, and discreet; would be restrained, by a just regard to propriety, from the use of your bounty. The rights of suffrage and being elected are so intimately connected, and the admission of the first being so certainly productive of the mischiefs to be apprehended from the last, that we cannot be induced to accede to the proposition made in your message of giving the privilege of suffrage to the nonjurors.

Thus gentlemen we have given you the reasons which induced us to dissent to your bill, and which have prevailed with this house again to return it with a negative, and to determine not at present to accede to any bill upon similar principles. When the treaty of peace is fully executed, the federal government strengthened, and we shall receive satisfactory proof of the attachment of the nonjurors to our constitution, we shall give every due attention to applications or propositions for conferring on them all the privileges of citizens.

By order,

J. DORSEY, clk.

Mr. Waters, from the house of delegates, delivers to the president the following resolution:

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, JANUARY 18, 1785.

RESOLVED, That the commissioners for the sale of confiscated British property, render distinct and separate accounts of sales of the property of every individual which hath or may be sold by them, charging each sale with every expence attending the same, including their commission, and that the net proceeds thereof, be carried to the account current of the state; which account of sales and account current shall be passed by the auditor-general; and approved by the intendant of the revenue, before the said commissioners be entitled to draw their respective commissions.

By order,

W. HARWOOD, clk.

Which was read and assented to.

Mr. Roberts, from the house of delegates, delivers to the president the following message:

By