

to know what advantages are proposed to be derived from your bill; for nothing is said of the uses to which the money is to be applied after it comes into the treasury. The whole of your plan is not communicated to us; all we know is, that one hundred thousand pounds is to be at the disposal of the legislature; and that the whole revenue is to be brought into the treasury in the bills of credit, subject to the future appropriation of the general assembly; and as this house cannot originate or amend any bills for appropriating money in the treasury, we shall be reduced to the alternative of suffering the money to remain there, or of assenting to any appropriation you may think proper to make.

It is stated in the preamble of your bill, as one reason for the emission, that a medium of commerce is wanting: This position is questionable. We think, that the scarcity of specie in this state has been greatly exaggerated; and that the apparent scarcity is not owing to a real want of money, but to the want of a free circulation of it, occasioned partly by want of confidence between the citizens of the state, and by the apprehensions and expectations which an emission of paper money has excited. After assigning the reasons for our opinion, that the scarcity complained of is rather artificial than real, we shall adduce some arguments to prove, that were there a real scarcity of coin, it would be unwise to emit a paper money to remedy an evil which would soon cure itself. Several facts have been advanced as certain proofs of an actual scarcity of specie, which do not carry conviction to our minds. The low price of lands, of negroes, the difficulty of borrowing money on the best security; the exorbitant rate of interest, may be attributed in a great measure to other causes than the scarcity of coin. The present value of lands is said to be low; compared indeed with the high imaginary value which was put on land immediately after the peace, the present price will appear low; but the purchasers, even at the present price, would not, probably, except in a very few instances, make three per cent. on their purchases. It is with land as with every other commodity, if much is brought to market, and there be but little competition among the buyers, lands will sell low; but this slender competition is a proof, it may be said, that coin is scarce. By no means, if coin can be more advantageously employed in other dealings. The value of money, compared with the value of lands and negroes, will rise not only in proportion to its actual, but artificial scarcity, and in proportion also to the multiplicity of gainful uses to which it may be applied; a cause very different from the scarcity of cash, may be truly assigned for the low price of negroes.

The many objects of purchase which offer a chance of great profit, may be assigned as one cause of the exorbitant rate of interest, and the difficulty of borrowing money on any terms; but the principal cause is the want of punctuality in paying the interest, and the delays and difficulties which the lenders experience when compelled to have recourse to law to enforce the payment.

If there be force in these observations, then the facts which have been assigned as proofs of an actual scarcity of coin, are not proofs, or prove only an artificial scarcity. We will now endeavour to establish more positively, that this scarcity is rather artificial than real: The price of labour is still high in this country, and produce, ever since the peace, has borne and now bears a liberal price: We do not hear that any part of this produce remains on hand for the want of a market; the whole crop of 1785, and such part of the crop of 1786 as could be brought to market, have been sold, and we presume the sellers have received in most instances the price, or equivalent, for the articles disposed of. Let us suppose that 12500 hogheads of tobacco were sold for cash in this state the last year, and that they averaged £. 15 per hoghead, it would take £. 187500 to purchase that number of hogheads. Supposing the wheat sold the same year to amount to 600000 bushels, and the price to be a dollar per bushel, the sum requisite to pay for that quantity of wheat is £. 225000. We admit that the same parts or incidental portions of these sums would be employed more than once in those purchases, and that therefore a considerable deduction must be made from the sum total; but it is to be noticed, that the circulation of money is not very rapid, and besides, we have taken no account in this estimate of one half of the tobacco made communibus annis in this state, and consigned to foreign markets by the makers of it; nor of the live stock and provisions brought to market within the year, nor of a variety of other saleable articles, the continued transfer of which, from hand to hand, must absorb and employ large sums of money.

An attentive consideration of this subject induces us to believe, the coin now in this state cannot fall short of £. 450000. Suppose us mistaken, and that it does not exceed one half that sum, would the emission of a depreciated paper money cure the evil, and effectually supply the want of coin? If coin is more advantageous to a country than paper money, even when good, (as it certainly is) we cannot by any means approve the policy of throwing a paper money into circulation as a medium of commerce, which will infallibly prevent the influx of coin. If the value of our exports should exceed the value of our imports, the balance, great or small, must be paid in coin. Country produce, should it be low, compared with the prices where they are consumed, will tempt foreigners and natives to import cash to buy up our produce, supposing the demand for it to continue the same, and that we would not accept foreign manufactures in payment.

A rapid circulation, the effect of a general confidence, a steady administration of justice, a well ordered government, a flourishing trade, would in a great measure supply the deficiency of coin; for a small sum circulating briskly, would perform the functions of a sum thrice as large, which should circulate thrice as slow.

If it should be supposed, that the prices of country produce would be increased by emitting paper money, it is answered, that as our produce is consumed in foreign countries, the value of it here must depend on the price it will command in those countries; for no merchant will continue to buy a commodity for exportation at a losing price. If therefore the produce of this country is now as high here as the prices at foreign markets will warrant, an addition even of gold and silver to what we have at present would not increase the price of exportable articles. Merchants would sooner export the