

liberties of the people." Although the judges hold their commissions during good behaviour, their independency cannot be complete, while their conduct, as it may please or displease either branch of the legislature, may procure an increase or diminution of their salaries. The saving of a few hundred pounds ought not to be put in competition with an object of so much importance, especially as it cannot be made without a violation of a public engagement, and by withholding a part of that recompence, which is but barely adequate to the services of men who devote their time and labour to the public, and have justly merited the regard and confidence of their country, by a faithful discharge of duty.

The following reasons have determined us to reject the bill "for the more easy and effectual setting off and providing for the discharge of the interest due to the creditors on the consolidated fund, and to explain and declare the law in future concerning debtors to that fund." State creditors under the consolidating act are entitled to receive in specie, the annual interest engaged to be paid them by that act, and are not bound to receive interest warrants in lieu of specie. These warrants will no doubt be a relief to those who have purchased confiscated property, and whose bonds are lodged in the treasury, and pledged by the consolidating act to the public creditors for the payment in the year 1790 of the principal sums due them, and of the annual interest to accrue thereon in the mean time, so far as the said consolidated funds shall be adequate to, or may be pledged for, such payments; but these interest warrants will not be equal in value to specie of the same amount, and consequently the public creditors will not receive what was engaged to be paid them by the consolidating act.

Another objection, still more forcible, lies against this bill. These interest warrants are made receivable in payment of any assessment, tax or duty, due to the state. Too great a proportion of the public assessment is now payable in certificates, and we are unwilling to adopt any measure which may increase that evil, and obstruct the influx of specie into the treasury, in discharge of taxes. The receipt of certificates into the treasury would lessen the capital of the state debt, and the interest warrants, proposed to be issued by the bill, might prevent the accumulation of interest, but they will not afford any relief to the federal government, which has called upon some of the states, and among others upon this, to raise troops, and have solicited loans of money for equipping and paying them, and have pledged the federal revenue expected to be raised in the course of the present year from the several states for the payment of these loans. The latter part of this bill takes from the courts of justice the decision upon contracts between the state and purchasers of certain confiscated property, and declares, that the operation of the contract shall depend upon the purchaser's construction of the law, a rule equally new and exceptionable.

We rejected the bill for the relief of insolvent debtors, not that we are averse to a bankrupt law, but because the proposed regulations differed so widely from those we think just and expedient, that it would have required more time to amend the bill, and model it into a good system, than could be spared, when objects more pressing and important engrossed our attention.

We have truly stated the reasons which induced us to reject the bills herein mentioned. We humbly hope the rectitude of our intentions will justify us before God, and we doubt not the reasons assigned will fully vindicate our conduct to those of our fellow-citizens who will examine them carefully and with temper. Our characters ought to exempt us from the reproach of duplicity; no part of our conduct can warrant the imputation, or justly subject us to the suspicion of having an interest separate from that of the people, or of being impatient of equal liberty. Some of us have been in the senate for ten years. A new election has lately been made, and a majority of the old compose the present senate. From this re-election and continuance of the same persons in the same trust, we may, without vanity, infer, that the conduct of the late senate has been generally approved, and that no suspicions are entertained against the present. We therefore flatter ourselves, that we possess the confidence of the people. If, for a steady adherence to principles we conceive intimately connected with the prosperity of the state, that confidence should be withdrawn, we shall regret this unmerited change of sentiment, but we should certainly deserve to forfeit the esteem of our fellow-citizens, if, accommodating our conduct to the opinions of others, we betray a want of sufficient fortitude, even to risk temporary disapprobation to secure permanent happiness to this country. We cannot consent to close the session without pressing upon your candid and serious attention the important subjects referred to in this message, and expressing our opinion, that the legislature is bound to attend to these subjects, and to adopt the proper means for carrying them into execution. A spring session will be attended with great inconvenience to individuals, and an unnecessary expence to the public; to defray this expence, additional taxes must be laid upon the people, who are represented by you as unable to pay those taxes which cannot be dispensed with, but at the hazard of all order and government. We are ready and willing to accede to any measures which shall appear to us calculated to promote the public welfare, give strength to the confederacy, and stability to our government; and we exceedingly lament, that the harmony of the two branches of the legislature, so necessary to promote these important purposes, should be interrupted; but, gentlemen, if you are determined to adjourn without finishing the public business, we shall have the several matters before us dispatched, so that an end may be put to the session this evening, and we shall hold ourselves acquitted before our country and the world, of the evils which may result from a measure we can neither prevent or approve.

By order,

J. DORSEY, clk.

Which was read the first and second time, unanimously agreed to, and, with the bill, entitled, An act respecting insolvent debtors, was sent to the house of delegates by William Hemsley, Esquire.

Mr. Seney, from the house of delegates, delivers to the president a bill, entitled, An act to reduce the salaries of the governor, chancellor, judges and other officers, for the time therein mentioned,