

The national debt being extinguished and the national treasury abundantly supplied with revenue by the existing tariff, which none seems disposed to disturb, the future disposition of the public lands, or the revenue arising therefrom, becomes a question of deep concernment, especially to the elder members of the confederacy. Various propositions having been made in relation to this subject, at different times and from different sources; some of them evidently conflicting with the interests and just rights of this state it has appeared to us proper to present the question to your consideration for such action on your part as, under all circumstances, shall seem meet and expedient. That this domain is the common property of the union, cannot, with propriety, be denied. A very large portion of it was acquired by the blood and treasure of the original states, and the residue purchased by funds equally contributed by all. What semblance of justice then there can be found for bestowing it, gratuitously, upon the states, within whose borders it happens to lie it is difficult, if not impossible to perceive. Reducing the price, at which these lands shall be sold to a mere nominal sum, or at all below the rate now fixed, appears to be no less, if not more objectionable; for this would equally deprive us of our rightful claim to a participation in their full value. The abundance and cheapness of the public lands has long been a serious obstacle to the growth and prosperity of most of the atlantic states, and to few, if any, more so, than to Maryland. We would not be understood as wishing in any manner to impede the fortunes of such of our fellow citizens, as may choose to emigrate, with the hope of bettering their condition. Neither are we actuated by the least feeling of unkindness towards our younger sisters of the west; but it would be unnatural and unjust to all the old states, not to insist upon one indisputable right at least to a fair proportion of the proper avails of this common property to be applied to such objects within the limits of the states, the wants and interests of the community may dictate.

Whilst the national debt existed, no claim was advanced for participation in the avails of these lands, because they were known to be pledged for its redempti-