

mise that no duties whatever shall hereafter be taken. We cannot but think it improper, so near the end of the session, to go into a revival of all those laws and consider the propriety of repealing the whole by a perpetual act; we have therefore amended the bill so as to suspend all the acts imposing duties so far as they relate thereto, except on negroes, for two years, before the expiration of which time, we hope our commercial affairs will wear a more promising aspect. A general revival of the laws relative to trade may be proper, and we shall be better able to form a system for the regulating our commerce.

By order,

R. POTTS, cl. sen.

Which was read, the amendments agreed to, and the bill passed for engrossing.

Thomas Stone, Esq; from the senate, delivers to Mr. Speaker the resolve relative to the erecting galleries in the stadthouse, thus endorsed; "By the senate, April 17, 1777: Read and assented to."

By order,

R. POTTS, cl. sen."

William Paca, Esq; from the senate, delivers to Mr. Speaker the bill, entitled, An act to establish a board of commissioners to superintend the marine department, &c. thus endorsed; "By the senate, April 16, 1777: Read the first time and ordered to lie on the table."

By order,

R. POTTS, cl. sen.

"By the senate, April 17, 1777: Read a second time by an especial order and will not pass."

By order,

R. POTTS, cl. sen."

And the following message:

By the S E N A T E, April 17, 1777.

Gentlemen,

WE have returned with our negative the bill, entitled, An act to establish a board of commissioners to superintend the marine department, and to import military stores. We think the power too extensive, and may subject this state to a vast expence, which in its present situation it is little able to bear. The immediate establishment of such a board we think unnecessary, and that all the requisite powers for directing and superintending the navy and commerce of this state, may with more propriety be lodged for the present in the governor and council.

By order,

R. POTTS, cl. sen.

Which was read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. J. T. Chase brings in and delivers to Mr. Speaker a message in answer to the message of the senate of yesterday by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Esq; which was read, considered and approved, and is as follows:

By the HOUSE of DELEGATES, April 17, 1777.

May it please your honours,

UPON consideration of your message of yesterday by Charles Carroll of Carrollton; Esquire, we have agreed to accept the clause in the bill, directing a punishment for those who should entice our people to return to a dependence on the nation, or to own any allegiance to the monarch of Great-Britain; and the clause assigning a punishment to the persons who should dissuade or terrify our people from supporting their independency, with the insertion of the words proposed by your honours. We do not see the force of your reasoning in justification of your first proposal to strike both those clauses entirely out of the bill. You seem to admit the propriety and strength of our observations in support of those clauses, and we doubt not are now fully satisfied that the offences prohibited by them are great misdemeanors, and of a very evil tendency. The only reason assigned for your former rejection of them is, "that they were so incautiously worded as to take away all freedom of discourse," and "might be construed an attempt to deprive the people of deliberating on matters which concerned their safety and welfare." We cannot but observe, that if the substance of those clauses met with your honours approbation, that it is unusual to reject either a law or a clause for an objection only to the terms in which they are expressed, and that the practice ever obtains to propose amendments. Your honours therefore will excuse us for presuming at first that your objection had been to the substance of those clauses, and not to the language or manner in which they were expressed. Any suspicion on that head must be now entirely removed.

This house consent to strike out of the bill the clause punishing attempts to depreciate our currency, tho' your reasoning does not influence our judgment to this assent.

We acquiesce in your proposed amendment to the clause inflicting a fine on persons who should dissuade or discourage others from entering into the service; and also agree to strike out of the bill the reward for taking up persons travelling without passes, and the clause for the punishment of the malicious and designing circulator of false news, and have only to lament, that an offence, in your honours opinion highly criminal, cannot receive an adequate remedy, even with your honours assistance, who are much better acquainted with the laws, opinions and customs, not only of the civilized nations of Europe, but of barbarians and savages, without (as your honours are pleased to observe, but in which we do not acquiesce) introducing a greater mischief.

It