

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS, APRIL, 1783.

March 1783—proclamation by congress for a general cessation of hostilities; letter from R. Morris of the 22d of February, with resolutions of congress of the 12th, 17th, and 18th of February—letter from the same of the 27th of February, appointing J. Nourse commissioner—letter from the same of the 25th of March, with a copy of a letter of the 17th to congress, and two letters from B. Franklin of the 14th and 23d of December, enclosing a letter of the 15th of March—a letter from the same of the 25th of March, with an ordinance of congress of the 4th of March, and an order recalling all cruizers—letter from the same of the 7th of April, with a state of receipts and expenditures 1781 and 1782—letter from William Jackson, assistant secretary at war, 8th of April—an order of congress of the 4th of April, suspending further enlistments—three letters of the 14th of October, 25th of November, and 14th of December, 1782, proposals and letters from Mr. Ridley and Messieurs Staphorsts, with J. Adams cert. two agreements between the same, of the 31st of July 1782, and a letter of the 2d of August from Van Staphorsts—a letter from William Hemsley, Esq; of the 24th of April—and the following message:

Annapolis, May 6, 1783.

I N C O U N C I L.

G E N T L E M E N,

WE have the honour to lay before you several letters and papers from the superintendent of the finances, the secretary for foreign affairs, Mr. Ridley in France, and the house of Nicholas and Jacob Van Staphorst, which require your attention and consideration. We have also the honour of communicating the preliminary articles of peace between Great-Britain and America; also a proclamation by congress, announcing the ratification and exchange of the preliminary articles of peace by Great-Britain, France, and Spain, and a general cessation of hostilities by all the belligerent powers. After a long and dreadful war, after conflicts and trials unexampled in the history of mankind, it is with heart-felt satisfaction that we now see our sufferings and labours crowned with success, and the independence of America established on the surest foundation. On an event so interesting and important, and so gloriously achieved by the valour and patriotism of our citizens, we beg leave to offer you our warmest congratulations.

Whether at so early a period of the pacification, it may be proper to proceed on the business of the treaty, we will not presume to say; but we are fully persuaded, that whenever the subject is taken up, it will be considered with the most serious attention; and that your measures will be dictated by the most enlightened policy, and distinguished by a firm resolution to maintain a fair national character.

The patient sufferings of our army at different stages of the war, their patriotic exertions and gallant achievements under every circumstance of difficulty and danger, give them an unquestionable claim to every public notice and regard; and when it is considered how much we are indebted to them for the liberty and independence of America, the principles of gratitude and justice cannot fail to produce the most speedy and animated efforts to make them a generous compensation for their great and important services.

The public creditors of every class are entitled to your earliest notice. It is a humiliating truth, that in this glorious contest for the dearest rights of mankind, our national character has been sullied by repeated violations of the public faith. We flatter ourselves, that the proceedings of this session will be honourably distinguished, by a zealous attention to public engagements, and demonstrate that it is your fixed determination to restore to government its best resource, the confidence of the people.

It is with concern we are obliged to speak of the wants and demands of government. By the act of November session 1781, to raise the supplies for 1782, the whole specific tax was appropriated, in the first instance, for the payment of one year's interest on adjusted certificates; and by the same act a large sum of money was appropriated for necessitous creditors, to be raised by the sale of specifics then on hand. By an act of October session 1778, the orphans courts are directed to provide for disabled soldiers by draughts on the treasury, and by a resolve of congress, soldiers unfit for duty, discharged from the service, are entitled to five dollars per month for life, in lieu of rations and all other demands. By a resolution passed at the close of the last session, specifics were ordered to be sold to pay off the arrearages of the barge equipment, amounting nearly to twelve hundred pounds; and by an act of the same session, the civil list was directed to be paid off in quarterly payments. Great and pressing as these demands are, the whole amount of monies lodged in the treasury for upwards of six months past, to be applied in discharging them, do not exceed five hundred pounds; and we humbly submit to the consideration of the general assembly, whether it would not more become the justice, honour, and dignity of government, to direct an immediate sale of specifics on hand, and with the monies pay the public demands, than to retain, merely in hopes of a rising market, a large quantity of wheat, and upwards of one thousand hogheads of tobacco, when, in the mean time, the demands of government are uncomplished with, the public claims unpaid, creditors disappointed, chagrined, and every day obliged to sustain additional wrong and injury; the solemn engagements of the legis-