

in the light of an act to disfranchise a number of citizens, but must be taken by all who consider the subject as an execution of the principle laid down in the bill of rights, perfectly consistent with it, and, being so, deprived no person of rights which he could justly exercise before the passing of the act, the right of suffrage being confined to persons having attachment to the government; therefore no person not having such attachment could fairly exercise the right. The act for the better security of the government, only adopted a mode of discovering who were, and who were not, entitled to the exercise of the privilege under the bill of rights. We have no reason to suppose, that those of the peaceable industrious quakers and methodists, who did not take the oath of fidelity, are dissatisfied with their present situation in our mild government, where no unequal burthens are imposed, or discrimination made, in the administration of justice, and if they wish us well, they would be averse to receiving a privilege, which must be participated by others who might disturb our tranquillity; and though your proffered lenity might have an happy effect upon some of the nonjurors, yet we apprehend by many others it would be received without gratitude, and the power given by it exercised not with a view to the prosperity but the disturbance of the state. This house has no resentment to gratify, and you could scarcely suppose we were to be drawn into the disagreeable office of excepting particulars from a general act of grace. That there are men of candour and moderation among the nonjurors we admit, and that some of them may be well disposed to our constitution we will not deny; but we believe these men would not be induced to act with so much impropriety, as to take part in the administration of a government in time of peace, which they declined to support in time of war. If, however, application should be made by men, whose characters and conduct may entitle them to the interposition of the legislature, and they have the weight of your recommendation, we shall listen to their claims with impartiality, and determine on them with justice; this we conceive would be a much more eligible manner of separating the inoffensive from the mischievous, than the mode pointed out by you. Under your bill we believe the most dangerous and meddling would be introduced into the public affairs of the state, while the more modest, sensible, and discreet, would be restrained, by a just regard to propriety, from the use of your bounty. The rights of suffrage and being elected are so intimately connected, and the admission of the first being so certainly productive of the mischiefs to be apprehended from the last, that we cannot be induced to accede to the proposition made in your message of giving the privilege of suffrage to the nonjurors.

Thus gentlemen we have given you the reasons which induced us to dissent to your bill, and which have prevailed with this house again to return it with a negative, and to determine not at present to accede to any bill upon similar principles. When the treaty of peace is fully executed, the federal government strengthened, and we shall receive satisfactory proof of the attachment of the nonjurors to our constitution, we shall give every due attention to applications or propositions for conferring on them all the privileges of citizens.

By order,

J. DORSEY, clk.

Which was read.

RESOLVED, That Thomas Johnson, Thomas Stone, Samuel Chase, and Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Esquires, be commissioners for this state to meet the commissioners appointed by the commonwealth of Virginia, for the purpose of settling the navigation of, and the jurisdiction over, that part of the bay of Chesapeake which lies within the limits of Virginia, and over the rivers Patowmack and Pocomoke; and that the said commissioners, or any two of them, have full power, in behalf of this state, to adjust and settle the jurisdiction to be exercised by the said states respectively, over the said waters and the navigation of the same, their proceedings to be laid before the general assembly of this state, and to be ratified or dissented to by the assembly; and that the said commissioners be directed to govern themselves in the execution of the trust reposed in them by the instructions of the general assembly, of the twenty-second day of December seventeen hundred and seventy-seven, and the instructions which shall be given by this assembly.

RESOLVED, That his excellency the governor be requested to inform the general assembly of Virginia, or, in their recess, the governor of that commonwealth, That Thomas Johnson, Thomas Stone, Samuel Chase, and Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Esquires, are appointed commissioners of this state, on behalf of this state, for the purpose aforesaid; and that they will meet the commissioners of Virginia at Alexandria, on Monday the twenty first day of March next, or at any other time or place which may be more convenient to the commissioners of Virginia.

RESOLVED, That each of the said commissioners be allowed the sum of two pounds five shillings current money per day, for every day he shall attend or be on his journey to discharge his duty as commissioner.

Sent to the senate by Mr. Dent.

The house adjourns till to-morrow morning 9 o'clock.

T H U R S D A Y, January 20, 1785.

THE house met. Present the same members as on yesterday. The proceedings of yesterday were read.

William Perry, Esq; from the senate, delivers to Mr. Speaker the bill to empower James Wignell to sell the real estate of John Ashburner, deceased, for the payment of his debts, endorsed;