

be amended by us, we will agree to it; but if you do not incline to agree to the former amendment, or present proposition, the subject must rest at present.

By order,

J. DORSEY, clk.

Which were read.

George Gale, Esq; from the senate, delivers to Mr. Speaker the following message:

BY THE SENATE, JANUARY 21, 1785.

GENTLEMEN,

WE had reason to believe, when our message of Tuesday last was sent you, that we should have been able to have dispatched some bills of importance, which, notwithstanding the constant attention of this house, yet remain unfinished. We beg you will continue to sit to-morrow, when we hope such business as both houses must wish should be discussed will be ended. You may be assured, this house is as anxious to rise as you can be, but we think, in the present state of affairs, it would be inexcusable not to devote one more day to the business of the session.

By order,

J. DORSEY, clk.

Which was read.

The message respecting the bill to provide a fund for the relief of the widows and children of the clergy of the protestant episcopal church, was read the second time, and the question put, That the house accede thereto? Resolved in the affirmative, and the bill ordered to be engrossed.

The engrossed bill No. 78, was read and assented to, and sent to the senate, with the paper bill thereof, by Mr. Cramphin.

The following message was read the first and second time, and the question put, That the house agree thereto?

BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, JANUARY 21, 1785.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,

WE are really concerned that the senate rejected our bill to impose duties on certain enumerated articles imported into and exported out of this state; the objects of it are very important, to bring a very considerable sum of money into the treasury to assist the revenue, and to encourage the building and navigating vessels, by our own citizens. If the duties in the act were imposed for the mere regulation of commerce, it would not have been a money bill, and we would have considered the amendments you desire; but to strike out of the present bill, (or to adopt the expedient of sending up another, omitting) the parts you object to, would be an *indirect* surrender of the privilege vested by the constitution in this house of originating money bills, and an admission of your honours to amend them; when by the form of government to such bills your assent or dissent only can be given. This house adopted the very small duties on exports from a conviction of their propriety, and that the imposition of them was justified by the maxims of commerce, as laid down by the ablest writers on the subject; and therefore, if we could alter the bill without waving our essential privilege, we should not be inclined to do it. The increase and prosperity of our commerce and navigation greatly depend upon the knowledge thereof, as founded upon national principles; which every legislator should endeavour to obtain, in order wisely to regulate the same, at all times, in his legislative capacity, for the true interest of the state. The leading maxim in commerce is this, to *import* less than we *export*, to preserve the balance of trade in our favour; and to decrease our imports from that country, that declines in the receipt of our exports. The great principle as to exports is this, to sell our produce (and manufactures, if we had any) as cheap, and as good in quality, at foreign markets, as any competitors, or rivals. This depends on the cultivation of our land, the price of freight, and the regulation of our taxes. As all duties laid on imports, in general, fall ultimately on the consumer, so taxes on exports are paid by foreigners; and consequently the *latter* are ever preferable to the *former*. Taxes on exports may always be imposed, and regulated by this simple rule; whether the duty proposed will decrease the exports, or lessen their price; if either will probably happen, the attempt should not be made; if they will not probably have this effect, they may be imposed with benefit to the state. We differ with you in opinion, and experience alone can determine who is right; and you cannot believe this house will continue any taxes injurious to commerce, which must necessarily affect the landed interest of this country. If the commission on the collection of the duties should produce an extravagant salary, we shall readily lessen it. The appropriation of the money can easily be adjusted at this time if necessary, or the next session. We are reduced to this alternative, to wave our opinion, maintain the true principles of commerce, as applicable to the case, and give up our privilege; or lose a bill very beneficial to the community. The duties on imports will amount to a very considerable sum, those on exports may produce about three thousand pounds.

If we had conceived, that the very trifling duties on exports would have been so very disagreeable to the senate, we would not have put them in the bill; but would have offered them, with the clauses of bounties for building and navigating vessels by our own people, to your consideration, in a distinct bill. We can only now say, if, on trial, this house shall discover, that we have mistaken or misapplied the principles of commerce, we will embrace the first opportunity to correct our error.

We return the bill, that you may reconsider the subject, and have an opportunity of assenting to it, if on further reflection you should think it more proper, than to reject the whole for a diversity of sentiment as to a small part of it.

By order,

W. HARWOOD, clk.

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