

cannot raise by taxes more than nine millions of that sum, without being greatly distressed, the deficiency therefore of five millions two hundred and twenty thousand dollars, must be made good out of the sale of British property. As you are presumed to be best acquainted with the circumstances of the people, we will not contradict the assertion, but we cannot refrain from remarking, that if true, it was not altogether so prudent to disclose this inability in the bill, and to dwell on it in your message. As we bear our proportions of the taxes, so we feel for, and most earnestly wish it were in our power, to alleviate the distresses of the people; the sale of British property, especially in the way you propose, might, and probably would, involve them in greater difficulties and distress hereafter. We have already assigned our reasons for this opinion, and it is the fixed, and almost unanimous determination of this house (could we reconcile the confiscation of that property with the spirit of our constitution, and our ideas of justice and true policy) not to suffer an immediate sale of any part of it; from which we have premised, you will not be at a loss to account for this determination. If the people cannot raise by taxes more than nine millions of dollars in nine months, without feeling the distress you mention, impossibilities are neither to be expected from us, or them. You seem to hold out an opinion, that our part of the expence of the war may be altogether defrayed by taxes, and the sale of British property; the opinion we conceive to be erroneous; the latter fund, in the way you propose to manage it, would soon fail, and to us it appears to be impracticable to raise annually, by taxes, a sum any ways adequate to the annual expenditure of the war, and of our civil establishments; the most opulent countries have not been able to tax their subjects so high. Yet are we not destitute of resources to carry on the war, even if internal loans should not supply the deficiencies of taxes. When the representatives of the United State perceive the impracticability of supporting the war by taxes, and internal loans, only, necessity will force them to adopt a measure, which justice and true policy dictate, and which had been ere now adopted, if partial interests had not interfered, and prevented its adoption. By making the back lands a common stock, and by selling a part of them, millions might in time be brought into the public treasury, and in the mean while great sums would probably be advanced on that security; monies may be borrowed in Europe, and of this we suppose the congress have assurances, by the late notice of their intention to draw bills of exchange to the amount of £. 200,000 sterling. The enemy's hope, that a bankruptcy would disable us from prosecuting the war, like all their other delusive hopes, even should that event happen, would vanish into disappointment; for we cannot concur with your assertion, that our paper currency is the only means of carrying on the war; numbers of people, and plenty of the necessaries of life, steel and iron, and not gold and silver, much less paper, are the true sinews of war. A brave, free, disciplined and virtuous people, possessing a country abounding with the former advantages, can never be subdued; if they are not virtuous, it will be the fault of their rulers in not setting them the examples of disinterestedness, magnanimity and justice.

One part of your message deserves our animadversion, not on account of the strength of the reasoning, but that we may prevent the impression it was evidently calculated to make on the minds of the people.

You assert, that if congress, in consequence of the rapid rise in the prices of the necessaries of life, should be constrained to call on us for our quota of two hundred and seventy million of dollars, payable in nine months and by monthly assessments, our people, to raise their proportion of that sum within the time limited, must pay fifty-four pounds out of every hundred pounds of property which they possess. This surely you must admit to be an uncandid exaggeration. We pay our taxes not on the present nominal value of our property, but on its old value, and consequently the people, even in the case put, would not pay more than one per cent. on every hundred pounds of their real and true property.

You urge the necessity of the immediate sale of British property, from the requisition of congress to make the first payment of our quota by the first day of February, and from the inability of the people to pay their quota by that time in taxes; and in support of this reasoning you observe, that from the change of property in the country there must be a new assessment. In answer to this, permit us to remark, that in time of war the grant of supplies generally precedes all other business; this, gentlemen, is your own peculiar department; we have now sat near eight weeks, and no supply bill has yet been offered to us; the confiscation bill, which you contend is essential towards the supplies, did not come to us till the fifteenth of this month. We presume you must have had good reasons for the delay; but if there is not now time enough for a new assessment, so that the people may be timely informed of what they will have to pay on the first of February, and to make a provision for such payment, we trust you will not consider it as our fault, who have nothing more to do than to pass or reject the bills framed by you for this purpose. Although circumstances might justify the remark, we cannot suppose that the delay has been occasioned with any design of raising an argument in favour of the immediate sale of British property, and we are satisfied that, upon further reflection on this subject, and from the reasons we have before given, you will be convinced of the impropriety of such sale, and that it cannot be the wish or desire to raise great contributions to a few individuals at a certain and heavy loss to the public. We again repeat, we are as sensible as you can be of the weight of taxes that must unavoidably fall on the people, and are equally desirous of lightening their burthens; but we are persuaded we shall never receive their thanks, if, endeavouring by expedients to shun small and temporary inconveniences, we bring upon them much greater future evils.

There was nothing in our message to justify your expression, "if you are still inflexibly determined not to seize and appropriate British property in our power to enable us to carry on the war;" it cannot even be inferred from that message, that we were against such seizure and appropriation: it only intimated our opinion, that a subject so new and so important might properly lie over for the consideration of a future meeting, to receive a fuller discussion. Nothing you have offered has induced us to retract this opinion. We have endeavoured to shew, that the precipitation with which you seem inclined to hurry on this business, may be attended with equal consequences, and we cannot persuade ourselves that any danger can arise from the delay of a few months, unless indeed it is apprehended, that any part of the property meant to be

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