

formed not to know that the rigour of the law of nations is much softened in this very point by the present usage and practice of the most civilised European nations; for the truth of this assertion we appeal to Vattel, a late and celebrated writer on the law of nations. As an independent and civilised people, would we not rather wish to imitate the conduct of all the civilised and enlightened nations of Europe, than that of the piratical states of Barbary? The consequences of such a seizure and confiscation may be serious and perplexing; a negotiation may possibly take place this winter, and peace soon ensue; it may, and probably will, be made a preliminary article of the peace, that that very property which this bill is about to confiscate, shall be secured to the present owners in such a manner, that they may at least receive the full and real value thereof. If therefore it should at this time be confiscated and applied, our constituents must be taxed, to repay the original proprietors the full value of the lands and chattels so confiscated and applied; and this, in our judgment, forms one of the strongest objections to the policy of the measure. You say, you propose to raise five millions two hundred and twenty thousand dollars from the sale of British property, and to make the first payment on the first day of next February; if so, the property must be put up to sale immediately, or on the shortest notice, at a time too when from the inclemency of the weather few will be able to attend the sales; others may be discouraged by doubts respecting the title, and the possibility of a resumption; the invidiousness of the purchase may deter some from purchasing. Under this concurrence of circumstances, is it not rational to conclude, that there will be but few purchasers, and little competition, and of course that this property will be sold greatly under value? It requires no great degree of penetration to foresee, who will become purchasers; we may venture to predict, that they will consist altogether of engrossers and speculators, men who have acquired great sums for little value, and therefore may afford to run the risk, whatever it may be, of realising their money on such easy terms. We submit to your serious reflection, and that of our constituents, whether the practices of those men have been such as to deserve so great an encouragement from the representatives of the people. You have informed us of the time for the first payment on the sales of British property; we wish you had likewise informed us when the last is proposed to be made; if it should be deferred to a long day, we apprehend the advantage to the public will still be more inconsiderable; for the industry and the arts of the probable purchasers, too successfully practised on other occasions, may depreciate the money to such a degree that the state may receive next to nothing in the end. But the public exigences are such, as to lay you under the absolute necessity