

chief, to be by him sent to the commander of the British army at New-York, and also to transmit copies to our delegates in congress, to be by them sent to the minister of the United States in France, with request that he may transmit the same to Great-Britain, to the end that all who may be thereby affected have notice thereof.

“ By the senate, April 15, 1780 : Read the first time and ordered to lie on the table.

“ By order,

“ H. RIDGELY, clk.

“ By the senate, April 17, 1780 : Read the second time and will pass.

“ By order,

“ H. RIDGELY, clk.”

“ By the house of delegates, April 18, 1780 : Read the first time and ordered to lie on the table. By order,

“ F. GREEN, clk.

“ By the house of delegates, April 19, 1780 : Read the second time by special order and will not pass. By order,

“ F. GREEN, clk.”

By the HOUSE of DELEGATES, May 5, 1780.

May it please your HONOURS,

THE rejection by your honours of the bill to confiscate the property of our enemies to the use of the state, subject to the disposition of the general assembly, has involved this house in very great difficulties. Your honours having offered no reasons for your negative, we still retain our former opinion, both with respect to the justice and policy of the measure. We are fully satisfied, that the seizure of British property is supported by the law and practice of civilized nations. We intended to remove every objection to the passage of the bill, and therefore declined to draw any line to ascertain what persons are British subjects; and were willing to leave the determination of that question to the judicial power. We omitted to mention the absentees in the bill, and unless by the law of nations or the common law, they can be considered as British subjects, they would not be affected by our bill; which only confiscated the property of the subjects of that nation. As your honours, at the last session, expressed yourselves greatly averse to the sale of British property, we have given no reason by the present bill to conclude we intended to dispose of it, and in our message (of the 12th of April last) we informed your honours, that it was not the intention of this house to dispose of any part of the property which the two houses should agree to sell as per-