

unity at large, would be necessary to make us a happy nation. If the general government, lately adopted, shall be arranged and administered in such a manner as to acquire the full confidence of the American people, I sincerely believe they will have greater advantages from their natural, moral and political circumstances, or public felicity, than any other people ever possessed.

In the contemplation of those advantages, now soon to be realized, I have recoiled myself to the sacrifice of my fondest wishes, so far as to enter again upon the stage of public life. I know the delicate nature of the duties incident to the part which I am called to perform, and I feel my incompetence, without the singular assistance of Providence, to discharge them in a satisfactory manner. But having undertaken the task, from a sense of duty, no fear of encountering difficulties, and no dread of losing popularity, shall ever deter me from pursuing what I conceive to be the true interests of my country.

MR. FENNO,

As the subject of the following Observations is undoubtedly of great importance, you will oblige your readers by a re-publication of them: The performance is taken from that very valuable Miscellany, the *American Museum*, published by Mr. CAREY, at Philadelphia. C. Z.

AN ESSAY, on the APPOINTMENT of PUBLIC OFFICERS.

Humbly submitted to all persons concerned in electing or appointing them.

THE perfection of government requires that every public office, in all the legislative, judicial, and executive departments, should be filled with the most suitable and fit persons.

Good government manifestly depends much more on the goodness of the men who fill the public offices, than on the goodness of the form of government, constitution, or even laws of the state; for the errors of all these, under the administration of good men, will be mended or made tolerable, either by the authority of the legislature, or favourable construction; but weak and wicked men will pervert the best of laws to the purposes of favour or oppression. And one principal thing which makes one form of government better than another, is, that there is a greater and a more natural chance of the appointment of suitable men to public offices in the one than in the other, and this makes the power of appointment, or right of election, a right of the highest importance to the community; it therefore requires the greatest wisdom in human policy, to vest this great authority in such persons, as will most probably exercise it with the most discretion and least corruption.

As the appointment of suitable men to public offices is of the utmost importance to the well-being of the state, and consequently implies a most sacred trust and duty in the electors; it may not be amiss to designate such outlines of character, as are most essentially necessary in a public officer, and especially when his office is of high rank, and very weighty concern to the community.

1. Integrity ought to hold the first place. The *integer vitas scelerisque purus* of the poet, is of mighty consequence in every society. A man of strict honesty and uprightness in his private life and dealings, is easily known and distinguished among men. Let this be an essential part of the character of the man, for whom you give your vote, to serve in any public office of trust and importance.

2. A good reputation, free from scandal. A man attainted of scandalous crimes, either by conviction on record, or by general opinion of his neighbours, appears with great disadvantage, in the sacred seats of public councils of law, justice, or equity. I have heard of a judge, who was generally supposed to have corrupted his neighbour's wife, and having once a very impudent offender before him, was severe in his censures of the offence, and opening the law book, read there the description of the offence and punishment; the delinquent said, with a most malignant sneer, he could wish his honor would turn over a few pages more, and see what the law said to whoremasters.

3. Religion and sincere piety. I don't think it of much consequence of what patrician profession of religion he may be, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Quaker, Lutheran, Calvinist, Moravian, &c. if he is reputed to be devout, sincere, and faithful to the religion he does profess. But a loose liver, or an apostate in religion, I cannot think fit to be trusted in the state, because a man who is not true to his God, will not probably be so to his country; for when the highest possible obligation cannot bind a man, it is not to be expected that he will be governed by lesser and more subordinate ones: when the grand first principle of all true morals is wanting, the practice must become too uncertain to be trusted in matters of weight and high moment.

4. Sufficient abilities, adequate to the office that is to be filled. There must be a congruity between the business to be done, and the abilities of the man appointed to do it.

5. Gravity, wisdom, and sound judgment. A grave and wise man gives weight and dignity to any department in which he is employed, inspires confidence that the business under his direction will be well managed, and what is more than this, will really do it well.

6. Decision, close attention, and perseverance. Some men are undecided in their judgment, variable in their attention, act by fits and starts, and often leave their business half done. It is very dangerous to admit men of this disposition into

public offices, where a coincidence of sundry departments is often necessary, and a failure of one will sometimes put a full stop to all the rest.

7. A great command of his passions. A man who is known to be a slave to any favourite passion, or who is too strongly devoted to gaming, the bottle, or his mistresses, is not thought a safe person to trust private business with, especially business of consequence, which requires a watchful diligence, discretion, and caution; much less can such a man be fit for a public trust.

8. Public offices should be filled with men of steady attendance. There is great complaint of tardy or totally deficient attendance, especially in the members of aggregate bodies, such as Congress, councils, assemblies, &c. by which means the public business is much and often very injuriously retarded.

I hope we do not live in an age so degenerate, as to render the above characters difficult to be found. The importance of them must be obvious to every person concerned in electing or appointing public officers, and I hope will induce them to make such a choice as shall satisfy the high trust reposed in them, and such as shall effectually secure the honor and safety of the state.

Philadelphia, Sept. 1, 1788.

MR. FENNO,

THE observations of TIMOLEON, upon the subject of appointments to office, inserted in your last, coincide in general, with the sentiments of the wise and independent part of the community; but his last article is rather too strait-laced: I conceive that a man of worth and real abilities, may, with propriety, let his pretensions be known, without letting down his own character, or wounding the feelings, or delicacy of those, whose patronage he solicits.

I go further, and suppose that duty and justice to the public, may unite to impel a person of the greatest modesty, to come forward with a statement of services, from which a competency of knowledge has been acquired, to discharge the particular trust applied for.

But if the idea of Timoleon should be adopted, the most meritorious characters might rest in perpetual obscurity, while their country suffered the loss of their abilities.

Merit, Modesty, and Diffidence, are nearly allied, and the two last have deprived the community of the first, two often already—and to add to the number, by throwing additional obstacles in its way, would be cruel, unjust, and impolitic.

While the influence of men in power is solicited with ardour, and a persecuting perseverance by those, to whom ignorance gives a brazen front, let us not deprive the Supreme Executive of a counterbalance to impertinent importunity, by discouraging the applications of worth and abilities.

C.

PROCEEDINGS of CONGRESS.

IN THE HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES of the UNITED STATES.

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 1789.

In our last we stated, that Mr. BLAND had introduced the proceedings of the legislature of Virginia on the subject of Amendments—it may not be uninteresting to state the substance of the observations that occurred upon this business. On one hand it was observed, that the application of the State of Virginia was made with a view of obtaining amendments, agreeably to the 5th article of the Constitution: That although the address of Virginia had been transmitted to the several Legislatures, but few of them had thought proper to coincide with that State—that it would be giving the address due consideration, to refer it to a committee of the whole, to be taken up at the time assigned for the House to consider amendments, of which notice had been given yesterday—that the address was from a respectable State, and merited an equal compliment at least, with other applications that had already been referred to the committee—that although this address might stand alone, yet it might be of weight in the decisions of the committee—that it rested on the basis of its own merits, and could not in the nature of its operation, if committed, contravene the spirit of the Constitution—that as it was a standing rule of the House, that they should go into a committee of the whole every day, there appeared to be a propriety in the commitment.

In reply, it was observed—that although the application was undoubtedly from the most respectable quarter, yet it appeared to be more proper, that it should lie on the table for the information of the members—that when a sufficient number of similar applications should be made, it might constitutionally come before Congress—that it ought to be treated with due respect—but that Congress had no deliberative voice, with respect to calling a Convention, agreeably to the application—that when two thirds of the States should apply, they were bound to call one—that it would not be paying proper respect to Virginia, to commit the application to a body which was not competent to deliberate or decide upon it—that as the House had been led to consider the fourth Monday of the present month as the time assigned to go into the consideration of amendments, then would be a proper season to bring forward the application—that it would be paying proper respect to it, to enter it on the journals: This was therefore acceded to with the addition, that it should be put upon the files in the Clerk's Office.

The House then resumed the report of the committee upon the article of tonnage—when

Mr. JACKSON moved, that 30 cents on foreign tonnage should be struck out, and 20 cents substituted—He enforced his idea, by observing, that as the main object to be effected by tonnage, was to raise a tax to support light-houses and other incidental charges of commerce, 20 cents per ton, he conceived, would be sufficient for the purpose.—The gentleman calculated, that upon the tonnage of Georgia only, this duty would be about £ 400. The tonnage proposed, was too high and would operate unequally and oppressively upon some parts of the Union, more especially the Southern States.—That at present, when the members of that House were scarcely warm in their seats, it became them to act with caution and due deliberation—the Constitution was in its infancy—it was well known that some States were averse from it—amendments were already applied for, and if we mean to conciliate the good disposition of States

not in the Union, we should move with caution. This tonnage would materially affect the State of North-Carolina—South-Carolina and Georgia were situated as North-Carolina, and all infinitely worse than the northern States.—Not only rice and lumber could not be exported, but 5000 hogheads of tobacco were now lying in ware-houses for want of shipping—Georgia was already borne down by the oppression of foreign impositions, and obliged to ship her produce under every disadvantage—in this humiliating situation, she looks to this Congress for relief—should she be disappointed, she may be sorry for the prompt and decided part she has taken in the second revolution: The Southern produce is now at a low ebb—the specie is leaving the country, and distress stares us in the face; at this time to encrease our burdens and difficulties, by encreasing the embarrassments on our produce, our only resource, will be oppressive and discouraging.—Mr. JACKSON concluded with saying, that he hoped the motion would obtain.

Mr. AMES replied to Mr. JACKSON—he observed, that much had been said about prejudices and jealousies between the different States—but for his part, he conceived, the situation of matters was upon a more agreeable footing.—Britain had excited and fomented those ideas—they had their particular views in so doing.—But it was very apparent, that other sentiments now predominated through the Union—our interests were mutual, and nature had so arranged the local circumstances of the Southern and Northern States, that commerce and agriculture were the natural pursuits of the two grand divisions of the Union—our interests were compatible—we must be united as a nation, and look with an equal eye to the good of the whole—a general idea pervades the Union—it was evident, that a greater and more extensive coincidence of opinion predominated, than had been conceived of.—It was not expected, that the general interest would have been so universally acknowledged.—The necessity and importance of a navy was now allowed on all hands—to effect this great and essential object, measures must be adopted—and those, the most obviously within our power, should claim our earliest attention—the encouragement of our commerce is undoubtedly among the most important articles conducive to this point.—The nursing of our navigation indispensable—the duty proposed has this principally in view, and though a small one, it holds up a necessary and advantageous discrimination between American and foreign vessels.—The voice of the continent concurs in this sentiment, and the prevalence of this and similar ideas, produced the present revolution, under the auspices of which we are now deliberating. Our navigation is not on a par with foreigners; encouragement is necessary, and every observation thrown out by the gentleman from the southward, in opposition to the duty, proves this necessity. The gentleman has said, that 5000 hogheads of tobacco are now laying in the ware-houses at the southward, for want of shipping to carry them off: What stronger reason for encouraging and encreasing our shipping, that provision may be made to transport our produce to market. And if this is the case, are we not at the mercy of our rivals? Our Agriculture calls upon us, to make this provision; and according to the gentleman's own account, the duty will not prove in any measure so burdensome, as the loss of 5000 hogheads of tobacco. The useful body of ship-carpenters through the States are complaining for want of employ; they are reduced to the necessity, of working for 30ths of a dollar per day, or quit their native homes, and seek their bread among the British, in the northern parts of the continent. Mr. AMES added many other observations, and concluded by giving his negative to the motion.

Mr. BURKE observed, That the people of the Southern States entertained friendly dispositions towards their brethren at the Eastward: He could speak for the inhabitants of South Carolina at least, that they took pleasure in their prosperity—that they looked to them for future protection, and wished to see their navigation flourish: This shews, that they are not jealous—but at the same time he conceived, that their professions and feelings would not justify their submitting in silence to the present proposed imposition on tonnage, which must, in its operation, prove extremely unequal and oppressive to them: The property of Southern gentlemen, it was well known, consisted principally in their produce—this they depended upon, and if they could not get it to market, the consequences were obvious, they could neither subsist, nor pay their debts: The operation of this duty will diminish the shipping, already insufficient: The deficiency of the Eastern shipping, is conceded on all hands—so that we shall be entirely prevented from exporting our produce: We wish to employ American ships, in preference to all others; but as there cannot be a seasonable supply, time must be given, that the Southern States may not be oppressed, and borne down by the regulations of Congress in the article of Tonnage.

Mr. GOODRUE, Mr. MADISON, and some other gentlemen, added several observations in favor of the discrimination proposed, and to the following effect, That a spirit of union and tranquility was happily diffused through the Union in the present instance—the sentiment was uniform, and although a kind of incompatibility had been pointed out, yet the idea was daily subsiding, and in time would be done away—that as the country abounded in materials for ship building, it was evident that just and proper encouragement would soon produce an adequate supply—and if in consequence of new regulations, temporary inconveniences should arise, they would soon cease, for the high profits of any particular business soon reduced it to its proper level—that however, it was not owing entirely to the scarcity of American shipping, that foreigners had in a manner monopolized the carrying trade from the Southern States, but the preference they enjoyed might be traced to another cause, a very ruinous one in the issue, and that was, the credit these foreigners gave, by which means they obtained an exorbitant price for their supplies, and they freighted apparently low—yet the fact was otherwise: But to prevent the sudden rise of freight, and the consequences apprehended, Mr. MADISON proposed, That a given time should elapse, previous to the commencement of a high duty, though a decided discrimination should immediately take place—the gentleman mentioned January 1, 1791.

Mr. SMITH, of South Carolina, observed, That the interest of the Southern and Eastern States were different, he conceived, in the present case: That so far from laying restrictions upon the exportation of the Southern produce, by a heavy tonnage, it was more necessary to give a bounty to encourage that exportation. South Carolina was now in a deplorable condition—her domestic debt was One Million—and she owes to foreigners 1000000 Sterling—all which must be paid in specie: This duty falls on the produce of the country, on the exportation of which their hopes were founded to pay these debts: The duty, he contended, was out of proportion, as it would affect the Southern States, by obliging them to pay a bounty to the Eastern and Northern, for which they could not receive any compensation: More than half the produce of South-Carolina, is now carried off by the ships of Great-Britain—this duty must consequently enhance the freight unduly, for notwithstanding the shipping of all nations had access to their ports, immense quantities of rice were now laying in the stores for want of shipping: this duty would further operate to the discouragement of foreigners and the disadvantage of the Southern States, by preventing their ships from coming out on speculation with cargoes, by which means supplies were obtained, and a rivalry among the freighters produced, which in some measure influenced the price in favor of the shippers. Mr. SMITH was willing a distinction should be made, but not a large one, and as the article of tonnage had been urged against the adoption of the Constitution, it would recur to the wisdom of the House whether it would be just and politic, to confirm any of those pre-conceived impressions against the Constitution.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6.

The bill for laying certain duties on Goods, Wares, and Merchandise, imported into the United States, was read, and referred to a Committee of the whole.

Mr. HEISTER presented a petition from ARTHUR GRIER, of Pennsylvania, purporting, that by certain calculations, he had ascertained the mode of obtaining the longitude at sea, to a nearer degree of perfection than had before been discovered—praying the countenance of Congress, and that they would secure to him the exclusive right of using and vending his respective improvements.