

(who never can become a subject) the possession of which is incompatible with our independence and safety, and that to take the private property of individuals, the enjoyment of which, upon their becoming subjects, is consistent with our safety, and strengthens our independence, is too obvious to need remarks.

We were at the last session of opinion, that even admitting we might rightfully have confiscated British property, yet a sale of it was impolitic, and this was one objection to the bill you then sent us. We still retain that opinion, and hope you and the rest of our fellow-citizens are now convinced that we judged rightly in that particular at least, but we cannot grant that there was any thing in our message upon that occasion, which intimated an acquiescence in the justice of the proposed seizure, and the principle of your bill, unless you deduce that acquiescence from our correcting an inference drawn from our message which it did not warrant.

You were restrained by your peculiar privilege from communicating your calculations to us, and therefore we cannot judge of them. We too have made estimates, and are well satisfied; that with the deduction of the national debt, made by congress in their plan, which in our opinion ought to be adopted and carried into full effect in the best manner, and proper attention be paid to economy in the expenditure of public money, the people of this state will be able and willing to support the glorious cause of liberty and independence, to the chagrin and disappointment of all our secret and avowed enemies. We wish not to lay burthens upon any part of the people of this state which may be grievous; none can be laid but such as we share equally with them, and we esteem it the highest honour, that our fate in every respect is so closely connected with that of our countrymen, that with them we shall succeed in our virtuous struggle, or nobly perish in the attempt. The tax of forty-five pounds four shillings on every hundred pounds real and personal property, payable in the present circulating currency, to be raised in eight months, sounds high; but when we consider what property it will take to pay this tax, it cannot be esteemed burthenfome by a people sensible of the important occasion upon which it is to be advanced. If we refer to the produce of an hundred pounds real property, we shall find it takes but a small part of such produce to pay this tax.

A man is possessed of a negro, valued at seventy-five pounds, who will hire for eight hundred pounds of crop tobacco for eight months; his tax will be, according to the estimated price, fifty pounds of tobacco, which is only one eighth part of his income; so of land and other property. An additional tax of seven shillings and six-pence new money, to be collected by the first of January seventeen hundred and eighty-two, for sinking the new money, will, at the estimated price, be only seventeen pounds of tobacco for every hundred pounds real property, and this will make the necessary taxes only sixty-seven pounds of tobacco on every hundred pounds real property, for the purposes aforesaid; and suppose all our expences hereafter should be as great as they are this year, we are satisfied a rate necessary to carry us through the war, will not exceed one fourth part of the income on the property of this state.

Under these impressions we give you all due credit for embracing the alternative of supporting our cause by taxes and duties, rather than submit to the disgraceful and galling yoke of Great-Britain; even was the burthen much heavier, we hope the alternative would scarce be balanced in the minds of our constituents; and we are satisfied a wise effectual application of part of the profits of their property, not only to secure the remainder from rapine and plunder, but their lives, liberty, and character, from ruin, will never be a cause of discontent.

They have been appealed to on the subject of confiscating British property, and we may fairly conclude that they do not expect, at this stage of the war, that property to be applied to carry it on, which at its commencement was not considered as liable to be appropriated to any such use.

We shall have no objection hereafter, when time and circumstances will admit, to establish an office to enquire into and ascertain what lands, lying within this state, are vacant, not laid out, and unappropriated, which did belong to the late proprietary, in virtue of his seigniority only; and shall be willing, on the said lands being discovered and laid out, to apply them on just terms, in discharge of the engagements of this state to the officers and soldiers who may be entitled to the same, in consequence of promises heretofore made. This we shall have time to do, if no other lands are appropriated to this purpose, before the period for fulfilling our engagement arrives.

We have well weighed and considered the questions which arise on the bill sent us, and which we rejected, and the more we reflect, the stronger appear the arguments in support of our conduct, and the principles upon which our bill was grounded. We have no repugnance to pass any law affecting the property referred to in your bill, which can in any manner be reconcilable to our ideas of justice, and are extremely willing and desirous to give every assistance in our power for effectually and resolutely supporting the cause of our country, to the final success of which nothing will more contribute than harmony among those who are to conduct the public councils; this we shall always be happy to cultivate and improve, nor shall we ever afford just grounds for its interruption. But we hope it is not expected, that to obtain this harmony and good understanding, we must tamely acquiesce in and submit to opinions and measures, which our judgments and consciences reprove, and sacrifice that liberty of deciding upon public questions;