

Thursday December 30th 1779.

The House met. Present as on Yesterday. The Proceedings of Yesterday were read. The Journal of Accounts read and reported to, & sent to the Senate by Mr. Hanford & Mr. Clamphorn Mr. Chase brings in the following Message.

By the House of Delegates, December 30th 1779

May it please your Honours,

The length and multiplicity of Matter contained in your Message of the 23^d. by Charles Carroll of Carrollton Esq. has required more Time to consider it, than if your Honours had confined your Observations and Reasonings to the true Points in Controversy. The Remark is very common, and founded in truth, that in the Discussion of almost every Question, the Parties mix and blend with it many collateral Matters, and raise up Subjects foreign to the Question, with Intent to perplex, and draw the Attention of the Reader from the true Point in dispute. This Observation we conceive, applies strongly to your Message, but Politeness forbids the Suggestion, that you had any Design, but to answer our Arguments in favour of the Bill, and to shew the Reasons and Motives of your Conduct. — We conceive the only and true Questions between us, are, 1st Whether the Seizure and Confiscation of all Property (debts only excepted) in this State, belonging to British Subjects, is supported and justified by the Law of Nature and Nations. 2^d Whether Policy requires or forbids the Exercise of the Right of Seizure at this Time. We apprehend the Description given in the Bill of British Subjects, the Line drawn to ascertain them, whether Persons are included who ought not, and the Mode of obtaining or of disposing of the Property, are foreign to and ought not to be blended with the Questions, those Matters can only obscure, but not elucidate, the Subject, on which we differ so widely from you in Opinion — Your Honours cannot discover the Justice of seizing and applying British Property, to relieve our People from heavy and intolerable Taxes, and to enable them to continue the War. We support the Measure by the Rule of Justice, applicable to our Citizens, and the Subjects of Great Britain. By Justice we mean a constant Regard to the common Interest, and in Conformity to it, rendering to both Parties what they are entitled to, by a natural political Claim: And we understand the true Principles of Justice to be, to do unto others what would be right for them (in a similar Case) to do unto us. To examine this Subject. The People of the Colonies, (now United States) oppressed by the King and Parliament of Great Britain, applied for a Redress of Grievances. Force was employed to compel their Submission to Acts destructive of their natural and civil Rights; Hostilities were commenced against them, they resisted by Arms; such Assistance was necessary and justifiable. The War continued, the Object of America was confined only to a Redress of Grievances. The King and Parliament of Great Britain declared the People of the Colonies in Rebellion, that their Property taken on the Sea should be liable to Seizure and Confiscation, and that it was lawful & just to seize and destroy their Persons and Property. Great Britain continued the War, and with her Troops and Juniors did seize and destroy considerable Property of our People. The War on the Part of Great Britain was offensive and unjust, on our Part not only defensive and just, but necessary. From the 19th of April, 1775, until the fourth Day of July, 1776, the Object of the War, on the Part of America, was only to obtain a Redress of Grievances, during that Period her Resistance, being