

THE NORTH-CAROLINA MINERVA, AND RALEIGH ADVERTISER.

RALEIGH:—PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY BY HODGE & BOYLAN, PRINTERS TO THE STATE.

VOL. V.

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 1800.

216.

EXTRACT

From the following Important Report of the Public Debt of the United States, in the causes of its accumulation, &c. was submitted to the House of Representatives, on the 8th ult. and ordered to lie on the table.

The Committee who were appointed on the twentieth of March to examine the accounts of the United States, relating to the public debt, and to report the amount respectively incurred and extinguished, and generally such facts as relate to the increase or diminution of the same, since the establishment of the government of the United States under the present constitution,

REPORT,

That for the purpose of obtaining every statement from the Treasury, which could elucidate the subject of enquiry, they addressed a letter to the secretary of that department, on the twenty fourth of March, a copy of which is subjoined to this report, and on the 29th of April they received his answer, transmitting sundry statements numbered from one to nine inclusive, and exhibiting in the most clear and satisfactory manner, the most important of the Treasury operations in relation to the debt, from the commencement of the present government. These statements, together with three letters from the Secretary on this subject, are now submitted to the house, and although it is certainly possible that some trivial errors may have taken place in the details which these documents contain, yet the committee are perfectly confident, that the general results which they produce must be correct.

The statements number one and two, contain an account of the receipt and expenditure of all public money, from the commencement of the government, and whilst they shew the application of the revenue to the debt, they will present, at the same time in one view, every expense with which the Treasury has been charged, and enable the legislature, with more accuracy, to decide how far those objects, or the amount of expense in particular cases may be diminished.

The order of those having particularly directed the attention of the committee to the increase or diminution of debt, they have thought it their duty to bring into view the amount of debt with which the present government commenced its operations and to contrast the same with the balance of debt on the first of January in the present year. In discharging this duty, it will become necessary to explain the principles on which these statements rest; which the committee will do in as concise a manner as possible. But before they enter upon this detail, they cannot forbear to express the satisfaction which they feel in declaring, that the documents which have been obtained from the Treasury, will, in their opinion fully demonstrate the precision and ability with which the business of that department has been conducted, and that by the fiscal operations of the government, the public debt has been diminished.

In ascertaining the amount of the old debt, two different principles have been taken by those who have made their calculations on this subject. The first has been to include only the interest upon the debt to the close of the year 1789, as the nearest convenient period to the day when the government commenced its operations, and after deducting from the aggregate of debt the amount of funds then in the power of the government, to consider the balance as the amount of old debt. The second principle has been, to take the amount of debt, as the same has been liquidated and funded under various acts of Congress, and after deducting therefrom the funds acquired or possessed by the government at the close of the year 1790, to consider the balance as constituting the true amount of old debt. The difference between these principles consists in this: by the last mode of computation, the interest which accumulated upon the debt, subsequent to the close of the year 1789, and until the debt was funded and provided for by law, is considered as a part of the old debt, whereas, by the first mode of computation, that interest is totally excluded.

In consequence of a difference of opinion, which it is understood still exists on this point, the committee have thought proper to state the debt in both modes, that the results in both cases may be perfectly understood.

	Dolls.	Cents.
The nominal amount of debt on the first of Jan. 1790, as appears by statement No. 9, amounting to	72,237,301	97
The funds then in possession of the government, and to be deducted, were,		
Cash in the treasury, January 1, 1790,	28,239	61
Cash in the hands of collectors,	83,127	84
Bonds at the custom-houses,	590,468	60

Debts due to the United States, under contracts of the late government, collected at sundry times,	62,586	74
Debts paid in specie during the year '89,	15,927	13
Proceeds of the sale of land to the State of Pennsylvania, made by the late government,	151,392	41
	931,742	33

Amount of debt January 1, 1790, 71,335,559 64

By the same document it appears, that the debt contracted by the late government, as the same has been liquidated and funded, by acts of Congress, amount to

That the funds possessed by this government on the 1st of January 1791, and to be deducted from the debt, were as follow:		
Cash in the treasury, January 1, 1791,	570,023	88
Cash in the hands of collectors,	225,786	95
Custom-house bonds uncollected,	1,052,215	13
Money collected from the credits of the late government, as in the preceding statement,	62,586	74
Debts paid in specie during the year 1789,	15,927	13
Sales of land to Pennsylvania,	151,392	41
Debts purchased and discharged during the year 1790,	518,424	08
	2,596,356	32

True amount of debt, Jan. 1st, 1791, 74,185,596 82

By the same document, No. 9, it appears that the debt, exclusive of temporary loans, on the 1st of January 1800, amounted to,

Temporary loans without deducting bank shares,	76,651,820	30
	3,640,000	

Nominal amount of debt Jan. 1, 1800, 80,291,820 30

Funds acquired by the government and which may be applied to face the foregoing debt:

Cash in the treasury, January 1, 1800, deducting therefrom the amount of unclaimed registered debt, and debt due to foreign officers, which are to be considered at all times as a charge on the specie balance in the treasury,	2,061,683	49
Remittances to Holland, beyond the sum necessary to meet all demands on the foreign debt, to the close of the year 1799,	548,955	84
Cash in the hands of collectors and supervisors,	532,247	81
Bonds uncollected at the Custom-Houses, estimated at six millions, payable on an average of six months, deducting the interest for that term, leaves	5,826,284	
2,220 shares of bank stock, cost	888,000	
Advance per cent	222,000	
Value	1,110,000	1,110,000

True amount of debt, Jan. 1, 1800, 70,212,718 16

For the purpose of shewing the rapidity with which the public debt was diminishing, at the time when the hostility of France compelled the government to incur those great and extraordinary expenses which appear in the treasury statements, and to enter upon that extensive system of defence, which has resulted in the security of our commerce, the committee have thought it necessary, in addition to the preceding statements, to present a view of the debt on the first of January 1798, remarking, at the same time, that the reduction which at that time had made, proves, in the most satisfactory manner, the ease with which the debt may be extinguished whenever the government shall be left unembarrassed by internal disorder or foreign hostility.

The nominal amount of debt on first of January 1798, was

	76,366,618	82
Funds to be deducted were		
Cash in the treasury, January 1, 1798,	1,021,889	4
Cash in the hands of collectors,	265,369	3
Cash in the hands of supervisors,	52,964	39

Value of bonds uncollected at the Custom Houses, Jan. 1, 1799, estimated at	6,309,058
Bank stock at its value.	1,110,000
	8,739,280 36

True amount of debt Jan. 1798, 67,627,339 46

From whence it results, that the amount of debt on the first day of January, 1800, is compared with the debt of January 1st, 1791, the debt has diminished by the sum of 3,972,878 dollars and 66 cents.

The extraordinary expense which has arisen within a few years, has swallowed up large sums of the public wealth, and diverted the application of these monies which might otherwise have gone to the extinguishment of debt, to objects connected with the honor, and in some cases with the immediate existence of the government.

In this class of expense will be included a large sum occasioned by the Indian war—one million two hundred and fifteen thousand dollars, expended in quelling two insurrections in the State of Pennsylvania—more than one million and an half expended in our transactions with Algiers and the other Mediterranean powers, together with a much larger expense occasioned by the unprovoked aggressions of France upon this country. Had it been possible, readily to have applied those various sums to the purchase of debt, it is easy to conceive, how rapidly the same might have been extinguished—The committee have likewise noticed the large sums which have been necessarily expended in the erection of light houses, repairing fortifications, in purchases for replenishing our military and naval arsenals, and in the building, purchase and equipment of more than forty sail of ships and armed vessels, together with a considerable loan of money to the commissioners of the City of Washington. The money expended on these objects, it is well known, will to a very large amount, and the property thus acquired by the government, and which is now on hand, cannot be estimated, on the most moderate calculations, at a sum less than four millions of dollars. The value of this property might be considered as composing another item in the credit of the general account of debt, but the committee have not thought it necessary to include it, and have noticed it particularly at this time, for the purpose of exhibiting a more general view of the extraordinary expense incurred by the government, and for the purpose of presenting all that information, in relation to the debt, which will enable the house accurately to appreciate the great and increasing resources of the country; and on this point the committee cannot forbear to remark, that the progress of the government, in its financial operations, must afford the most flattering presages of its future success, if the same system is pursued which has hitherto proved so successful. It cannot certainly be unworthy of remarks, that ten years have not at this time elapsed since the government fairly commenced its operations; that during that period it has been necessary to liquidate, to fund and to provide for a large capital of floating debt which had grown out of the disorders of the confederation; that during the same short period, the government has been compelled to contend with one expensive war on the frontier, with two insurrections in the centre of our own country, and with deprecation and hostility from the nations of Europe; that these embarrassments have nevertheless been faced by the government; most of the difficulties have been surmounted; the debt has been liquidated and diminished and the nation has still continued to increase in wealth and population beyond all former example; and although the contest in which we are now engaged, may, for a short period retard the further extinguishment of debt, or perhaps produce a small addition to that which already exists, yet it cannot be doubted, that whilst we maintain order at home, no exterior circumstances can exhaust or greatly diminish the increasing resources of the nation.

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE, May 5.

THE law requires that every owner or possessor of a Still or Stills make entry thereof within the month of June annually; and those who may at any time bring into the county a Still or Stills, to enter the same within thirty days after being brought therein, and before he or she shall begin to use such Stills under the penalty of two hundred and fifty dollars; and for the purpose above mentioned I shall attend the first three days of June court next, at the house formerly occupied by E. Sanders, in Raleigh.

HENRY JONES, Collector.
12th D. 4th Survey.