

NORTH-CAROLINA GAZETTE.

With the latest ADVICES, FOREIGN and DOMESTIC.

SEMPER PRO LIBERTATE, ET BONO PUBLICO.

IN CONGRESS, April 22, 1778.

TH E committee to whom was referred the General's letter of the 18th, containing a certain printed paper sent from Philadelphia, purporting to be the draught of a bill for declaring the intentions of the parliament of Great-Britain, as to the exercise of what they are pleased to term their right of imposing taxes within these united states; and also the draught of a bill to enable the king of Great Britain to appoint commissioners, with powers to treat, consult, and agree upon the means of quieting certain disorders within the said states, beg leave to observe,

That the said paper being industriously circulated by emissaries of the enemy, in a partial and secret manner, the same ought to be forthwith printed for the public information.

The committee cannot ascertain whether the contents of the said paper have been framed in Philadelphia or in Great-Britain, much less whether the same are really and truly intended to be brought into the parliament of that kingdom, or whether the said parliament will confer thereon the usual solemnities of their laws. But are inclined to believe this will happen, for the following reasons.

1st. Because their general hath made divers feeble efforts to set on foot some kind of treaty during the last winter, though, either from a mistaken idea of his own dignity and importance, the want of information, or some other cause, he hath not made application to those who are invested with a proper authority.

2dly. Because they suppose that the fallacious idea of a cessation of hostilities will render these states remiss in their preparations for war.

3dly. Because believing the Americans wearied with war, they suppose we will accede to their terms for the sake of peace.

4thly. Because they suppose that our negotiations may be subject to a like corrupt influence with their debates.

5thly. Because they expect from this step the same effects they they did from what one of their ministers thought proper to call his conciliatory motion, viz. that it will prevent foreign powers from giving aid to these states; that it will lead their own subjects to continue a little longer the present war; and that it will detach some weak men in America from the cause of freedom and virtue.

6thly. Because their king, from his own showing, hath reason to apprehend that his fleets and armies, instead of being employed against the territories of these states, will be necessary for the defence of his own dominions. And

7thly. Because the impracticability of subjugating this country being every day more and more manifest, it is their interest to extricate themselves from the war upon any terms.

The committee beg leave further to observe, that upon a supposition the matters contained in the said paper will really go into the British statute book, they serve to show, in a clear point of view, the weakness and wickedness of the enemy. *Their weakness.*

1st. Because they formerly declared, not only that they had a right to bind the inhabitants of these states in all cases whatsoever, but also that the said inhabitants should absolutely and unconditionally submit to the exercise of that right. And this submission they have endeavoured to exact by the sword. Receding from this claim, therefore, under the present circumstances, shews their inability to enforce it.

2dly. Because their prince hath heretofore rejected the humblest petitions of the representatives of America, praying to be considered as subjects, and protected in the enjoyment of peace, liberty, and safety; and hath waged a most cruel war against them, and employed the savages to butcher innocent women and children. But now the same prince pretends to treat with these very representatives, and grant to the arms of America what he refused to her prayers.

3dly. Because they have uniformly laboured to conquer this continent, rejecting every idea of accommodation proposed to

them, from a confidence in their own strength. Wherefore it is evident, from the change in their mode of attack, that they have lost this confidence. And

4thly. Because the constant language, spoken not only by their ministers, but by the most public and authentic acts of the nation, hath been that it is incompatible with their dignity to treat with the Americans while they have arms in their hands.— Notwithstanding which, an offer is now about to be made for treaty.

The wickedness and insincerity of the enemy appear from the following considerations.

1st. Either the bills now to be passed contain a direct or indirect cession of a part of their former claims, or they do not. If they do, then it is acknowledged that they have sacrificed many brave men in an unjust quarrel. If they do not, then they are calculated to deceive America into terms, to which neither argument before the war, nor force since, could procure her assent.

2dly. The first of these bills appears, from the title, to be a declaration of the intentions of the British parliament concerning the exercise of the right of imposing taxes within these states.— Wherefore, should these states treat under the said bill, they would indirectly acknowledge that right, to obtain which acknowledgement the present war hath been avowedly undertaken and prosecuted on the part of Great-Britain.

3dly. Should such pretended right be so acquiesced in, then, of consequence, the same might be exercised whenever the British parliament should find themselves in a different temper and disposition; since it must depend upon these, and such like contingencies, how far men will act according to their former intentions.

4thly. The said first bill, in the body thereof, containeth no new matter, but is precisely the same with the motion before mentioned, and liable to all the objections which lay against the said motion, excepting the following particular, viz. that by the motion actual taxation was to be suspended, so long as America should give as much as the said parliament might think proper; Whereas, by the proposed bill, it is to be suspended, as long as future parliaments continue of the same mind with the present.

5thly. From the second bill it appears, that the British king may, if he pleases, appoint commissioners to treat and agree with those, whom they please, about a variety of things therein mentioned. But such treaties and agreements are to be of no validity without the concurrence of the said parliament, except so far as they relate to the suspension of hostilities, and of certain of their acts, the granting of pardons, and the appointing of Governors to these sovereign, free and independent states. Wherefore, the said parliament have reserved to themselves, in express words, the power of setting aside any such treaty, and taking the advantage of any circumstances which may arise to subject this continent to their usurpations.

6thly. The said bill, by holding forth a tender of pardon, implies a criminality in our justifiable resistance, and consequently, to treat under it would be an implied acknowledgement that the inhabitants of these states were, what Britain hath declared them to be, rebels.

7thly. The inhabitants of these states being claimed by them as subjects, they may infer, from the nature of the negotiation now pretended to be set on foot, that the said inhabitants would of right be afterwards bound by such laws as they should make. Wherefore any agreement entered into on such negotiation might at any future time be repealed. And

8thly. Because the said bill purports, that the commissioners therein mentioned may treat with private individuals; a measure highly derogatory to the dignity of a national character.

From all which it appears evident to your committee, that the said bills are intended to operate upon the hopes and fears of the good people of these states, so as to create divisions among them, and a defection from the common cause, now by the blessing of divine providence drawing near to a favourable issue. That they are the sequel of that insidious plan, which, from the days of the