

if sent from Britain, in that case to have a seat and voice in the assemblies of the different states to which they may be deputed respectively, in order to attend to the several interests of those by whom they are deputed.

"In short, to establish the power of the respective legislatures in each particular state, to settle its revenue, its civil and military establishment, and to exercise a perfect freedom of legislation and internal government, so that the British states throughout North-America, acting with us in peace and war under one common sovereign, may have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege, that is short of a total separation of interests, or consistent with that union of force, on which the safety of our common religion and liberty depends.

"In our anxiety for preserving those sacred and essential interests, we cannot help taking notice of the insidious interposition of a power, which has, from the first settlement of these colonies, been actuated with enmity to us both. And notwithstanding the pretended date or present form of the French offers to North America, yet it is notorious that these were made in consequence of the plans of accommodation previously concerted in Great-Britain, and with a view to prevent our reconciliation, and to prolong this destructive war.

"But we trust that the inhabitants of North-America, connected with us by the nearest ties of consanguinity, speaking the same language, interested in the preservation of similar institutions, remembering the former happy intercourse of good offices, and forgetting recent animosities, will shrink from the thought of becoming an accession of force to our late mutual enemy, and will prefer a firm, a free and perpetual coalition with the parent state, to an insincere and unnatural foreign alliance.

"This dispatch will be delivered to you by Dr. Ferguson, the secretary to his majesty's commission. And for further explanation and discussion of every subject of difference, we desire to meet with you, either collectively or by deputation, at New-York, Philadelphia, York-Town, or such other place as you may propose. We think it right, however, to apprise you, that his majesty's instructions, as well as our own desire to remove from the immediate seat of war, in the active operations of which we cannot take any part, may induce us speedily to remove to New-York: But the commander in chief of his majesty's land forces, who is joined with us in this commission, will, if it should become eligible, either concur with us in a suspension of hostilities, or will furnish all necessary passports and safe conduct to facilitate our meeting, and we shall of course expect the same of you.

"If, after the time that may be necessary to consider this communication and transmit your answer, the horrors and devastations of war should continue, we call God and the world to witness, that the evils which must follow are not to be imputed to Great-Britain: And we cannot, without the most real sorrow, anticipate the prospect of calamities, which we feel the most ardent desire to prevent. We are, with perfect respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servants,

CARLISLE,
WM. EDEN,
GEO. JOHNSTONE."

Philadelphia,
9th June, 1778.

To His Excellency HENRY LAURENS, the President, and other
the members of Congress.

Gentlemen,

THE dispatch inclosed with this was carried this morning to the nearest post of General Washington's army by Doctor Ferguson, secretary to his majesty's commission for restoring peace, &c. but he, not finding a passport, has returned to this place. In order to avoid every unnecessary delay, we now again send it by the ordinary conveyance of your military posts. As soon as the passport arrives, Doctor Ferguson shall wait upon you according to our first arrangement. We are, with perfect respect,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient and most humble servants,

CARLISLE,
WM. EDEN,
GEO. JOHNSTONE."

Philadelphia,
June 1778.

Ordered, That they be referred to a committee of five.
Eodem Die, P. M.

The committee to whom were referred the letters and papers from the earl of Carlisle, &c. commissioners from the King of Great-Britain, reported the draught of a letter, which was read.
Resolved, That the consideration thereof be postponed till tomorrow.
June 17, 1778.

Congress resumed the consideration of the draught of the letter in answer to the letter and papers received from the earl of Carlisle, &c. commissioners from the King of Great-Britain, which was unanimously agreed to, and is as follows:

To their Excellencies the Right Hon. the Earl of CARLISLE, WILLIAM EDEN, Esq; GEORGE JOHNSTONE, Esq; commissioners from his Britannic majesty, Philadelphia.

I HAVE received the letter from your Excellencies of the 9th instant, with the enclosures, and laid them before Congress. Nothing but an earnest desire to spare the farther effusion of human blood could have induced them to read a paper, containing expressions so disrespectful to his most christian majesty, the good and great ally of these states; or to consider propositions so derogatory to the honour of an independent nation.

"The acts of the British parliament, the commission from your sovereign, and your letter, suppose the people of these states to be subjects of the crown of Great-Britain, and are founded on the idea of dependence, which is utterly inadmissible.

"I am further directed to inform your excellencies, that Congress are inclined to peace, notwithstanding the unjust claims from which this war originated, and the savage manner in which it has been conducted. They will therefore be ready to enter upon the consideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconsistent with treaties already subsisting, when the King of Great-Britain shall demonstrate a sincere disposition for that purpose. The only solid proof of this disposition will be, an explicit acknowledgement of the independence of these states, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellencies most obedient and humble servant,

Signed, by order of the unanimous voice of Congress,

HENRY LAURENS, President.

York Town, June 17, 1778.

Resolved unanimously, That Congress approve the conduct of General Washington in refusing a passport to Doctor Ferguson.
Published by order of Congress.

CHARLES THOMSON, Sec.

[Private]

Dear Sir,

Philadelphia, June 14, 1778.

I BEG to transfer to my friend Dr. Ferguson, the private civilities which my friends Mr. Manning and Mr. Oswald request in my behalf. He is a man of the utmost probity, and of the highest esteem in the republic of letters.

"If you should follow the example of Britain in the hour of her influence, and send us back without a hearing, I shall hope, from private friendship, that I may be permitted to see the country, and the worthy characters she has exhibited to the world, upon making the request in any way you may point out. I am, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

His Excel. Hen. Laurens, Congress.

GEO. JOHNSTONE."

Dear Sir,

York Town, June 14, 1778.

YESTERDAY I was honoured with your favour of the 10th, and thank you for the transmission of those from my dear and worthy friends Mr. Oswald and Mr. Manning.—Had Dr. Ferguson been the bearer of these papers, I should have shown that gentleman every degree of respect and attention, that times and circumstances admit of.

"It is, Sir, for Great-Britain to determine whether her commissioners shall return unheard by the representatives of these United States, or revive a friendship with the citizens at large, and remain among us as long as they please.

"You are undoubtedly acquainted with the only terms upon which Congress can treat for accomplishing this good end; terms from which, although written in a private character, I may ven-