

Philadelphia 22^d January 1782 103

Sir

Circular.

Although it may be somewhat out of my province, to address your Excellency on a subject, not immediately of a military nature, yet, I consider it so nearly connected with and so essential to the operations under my direction, that I flatter myself, my interference will not be deemed impertinent.

Upon applying to the Superintendant of Finance, to know how far I might depend upon him for the pay - feeding and cloathing of the Army, for the current Year, and for the sums necessary to put it and keep it in motion, he very candidly laid open to me the state of our moneyed affairs, and convinced me, that, although the assistance we had derived from abroad were considerable, yet, they would be by no means adequate to our expences. He informed me further, that to make up this deficiency, the States had been called upon, by Congress, for Eight Millions of Dollars for the service of the year 1782, and shewed me the Copy of a circular letter from himself to the several Legislatures, in which he had so fully and ^{clearly} pointed out the necessity of a compliance with the Requisition, that it is needless for me to say more on that head, than

that

that I entirely concur with him in opinion, so far as he has gone into the matter - But there are other reasons, which could not be so well known to him as they are to me, as having come under my immediate observation, and which, therefore, I shall take the liberty to mention.

Your Excellency cannot but remember the ferment into which the whole Army was thrown, twelve Months ago, for the want of pay and a regular supply of Cloathing and provisions, and with how much difficulty they were brought into temper, by a partial supply of the two first, and a promise of more regular supplies of all in future. Those promises the Soldiering now begin to claim, and altho' we shall be able to satisfy them tolerably in respect to Cloathing, and perfectly in regard to provision, (if the Financier is enabled to comply with his Contracts) yet there is no prospect of obtaining pay, untill part of the money required of the State can be brought into the treasury.

You cannot conceive the uneasiness which arises from the total want of so essential an Article as Money, and the real difficulties in which the Officers, in particular, are involved on that account. The favorable aspect of our affairs, and the hopes that matters are in a train to afford them relief contribute to keep them quiet; but I cannot answer for the effects of a

disappointment.

Enabling the Financier to comply with his Contracts, is a matter of the utmost consequence - the very existence of the Army depends upon it. Should he fail in his payments, the Contract ceases, and there is no alternative left, but to disband or live upon the seizure of the neighbouring property. The saving to the public, by ~~this method~~ ^{by Contract} of feeding an Army, is too well known to need any illustration, and that alone ought to be a sufficient inducement to the States to find the means of adhering to it.

It will, perhaps, be urged, that the sum called for is immense, and beyond the ability of the Country to pay. There is one plain answer to that objection, should it be made - It is, that if the War is carried on, a certain expence must be incurred, and that such expence must be drawn from the people, either by a partial - cruel and I may say illegal seizure of that property which lays most convenient to the Army, or by a regular and equitable Tax in Money or specific Articles.

Money, if it can be procured, is to be preferred, because it is neither liable to waste, nor is it expensive in the mode of collection or transportation. Whereas, I think I may venture to say, that a great proportion

proportion of the specific Articles have been wasted after the people have furnished them, and that the transportation alone, of what have reached the Army, has, in numberless instances, cost more than the value of the Articles themselves.

To bring this War to a speedy and happy conclusion, must be the fervent wish of every lover of his Country; and sure I am, that no means are so likely to effect these, as vigorous preparations for another Campaign. Whether then we consult our true interest, substantial economy - or sound policy, we shall find that relaxation and languor are, of all things to be avoided. Conduct of that kind, on our part, will produce fresh hopes and new exertions on that of the enemy; whereby, the War, which has already held beyond the general expectation, may be protracted to such a length, that the people, groaning under the burthen of it and despairing of success, may think any change, a change for the better -

I will close with a request, that your Excellency will be good enough to take the first opportunity of laying these my sentiments before the Legislature of your State. From the attention they have ever been pleased to pay to any former requisitions

requisitions or representations of mine, I am encouraged
to hope, that the present, which is equally important
with any I have ever made, will meet with a favorable
reception —

I have the honor to be

with the greatest Respect

Your Excellency^s

Mostob.^t and kble serv^t

G. Washington

P.S. The Return of Troops called for by Resolv. of the 10th of
Decemr. is collecting and will be forwarded very soon. The
remote situation of some of the Corps has made it a tedious
business, but such is the nature of it, that an accurate
Return cannot be digested untill the Returns of all the
Legionary Corps and those of Artillery are obtained, that
credit may be given for the men serving in them —

His Excellency

Pres^t. Wash.

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