especially as by far the greater part, perhaps nine-tenths of the business comes within the jurisdiction of this board, as will appear by two letters of his excellency governor Claiborne to the secretary of state; the first dated on the 5th day of November, 1802, and the other on the 20th day of January, 1803, to which they beg leave to refer.

The commissioners respectfully suggest the expediency and justice of bringing the claimants described in the third section of the act within the provisions of the second section; or at least to allow them a quantity of land not exceeding acres. This additional provision, for actual settlers, is suggested from the opinion which those settlers entertained at the time of settling of the liberality of the general government towards those who should venture with their families into this insulated territory. Most of those people are poor, and claim but a small quantity of land, which they are not able to purchase, and without such a provision, they must leave their little habitations or become tenants; and it is conceived that this additional provision will not interfere with the intention of the law, which was, not to exclude the poor and honest settler, striving to raise his family, but those of a different character.

All which is respectfully submitted by,

(*Signed*) { THOMAS RODNEY,
ROBERT WILLIAMS,
EDWARD TURNER.

To the hon. Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury of the United States.

DOCUMENT, No. III.

Extract of a Letter from the Mississippi Territory, dated 8th September, 1803.

"But gaining a knowledge of some circumstances, which, although not immediately connected with my department, I deem of high importance to my country, and therefore think it my duty to disclose them without delay.

"In consequence of information from numerous and respectable sources, I am compelled to believe that practises highly fraudulent and injurious to the United States are very prevalent in the newly acquired territory of Louisiana.

"I have no doubt of the correctness of my information, that a vast number of adventurers, many of them from this territory, are daily making extensive surveys, on the west side of the Mississippi; and Spanish officers have lately set up claims to, and are now disposing of, large tracts, some even sixty miles square, at reduced prices, in some instances not more than ten cents per acre?

"It seems some respectable citizens of this territory, who have spurned the nefarious offer, have been invited to a participation in this harvest of iniquity; the inviters alleging that land of the first quality might be obtained for a few cents per acre; and respecting titles, as good as may be had, (say they) as those by which lands are held on this side of the river: (probably *antedated Spanish grants.*)

"A knowlege of former transactions in this territory, during the interval between the treaty of 1795, and evacuation by the Spanish government, will lead one to an easy solution of the mystery by which this speculation will be veiled;—the warrant of survey, the surveyor's certificate, and the final grant, will bear concurrent date, prior to the cession of Louisiana to France.

"I am told, that in most, if not in all cases, these surveyors are Spanish subjects, and their assistants and chain carriers, Spanish soldiers, who will probably all move off with the Spanish government. I therefore apprehend that for any tribunal hereafter to discriminate between the just and the fraudulent claim will be difficult, even if oral testimony be admitted, but if, to its exclusion, the Spanish record be paramount evidence, impossible."

Extract of a Letter from New-Orleans, dated 29th September, 1803.

"We are told that your government is treating with Spain for the purchase of West-Florida—and the Intendant here, probably foreseeing the cession, has opened a sale within these few days, for the uninhabited lands in that province—and orders of survey have, I believe, been already issued for three or four hundred thousand acres. No individual thinks of purchasing less than 40 to 50,000 acres, the value of which, it is supposed, may be estimated from 12 *a* 25 cents per acre, to be paid for by different instalments. I presume, that within ten days from this time, orders of survey will be issued for every acre of vacant land in West-Florida. No lands are yet offered for sale in Louisiana, but I think it not improbable there will be soon."

NOTE—The writer living in New-Orleans, was not aware that the western part of the *British* province of West-Florida makes part of the territories ceded to the United States by *France.*

Extract of a Letter from Kaskaskias.

INDIANA TERRITORY,

Kaskaskia, Oct. 18, 1803.

ALBERT GALLATIN, ESQ.

Dear Sir,

You have no guess how the United States are imposed on by the Spanish officers since they have heard of the cession of Louisiana. Grants are daily making for large tracts of land and dated back; some made to men who have been dead 15 or 20 years, and transferred down to the present holders. These grants are made to Americans with a reserve of interest to the officer who makes them;—within fifteen days the following places have been granted, to wit: 45 acres choice of the lead mines, 60 miles from this, heretofore reserved to the Crown of Spain. The iron mine on Wine-Creek, with 10,000 acres around it, about 80 miles from this place, and formerly reserved by the Crown of Spain. 60,000 acres, the common touching St. Louis, heretofore given by the crown of Spain to the inhabitants of the village. The tin mine (though of doubtful value) and 15,000 acres adjoining, and many other grants of 10, 15, 20 and 30,000 acres have been made. I could name persons as well as places.

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, January 18.

Debate on Mr. Rodney's motion for the extinguishment of the Balances reported to be due by several states.

(Continued.)

Mr. RODNEY. I hope I shall receive the indulgence of the Committee in replying in a very concise manner to the remarks of gentlemen against the resolution which I have had the honor of submitting. The strong ground taken by the friends of the motion has not, in my opinion, been shaken by any thing which has fallen from those who are opposed to it. We have stated that there exist on the books of the treasury certain balances against particular states, which are productive of great injury to them, while they do not and cannot benefit the United States one dollar. Have gentlemen pointed out any mode in which the amount of these balances is to be obtained? Have they shewn the way in which the United States can legitimately obtain a single cent? Have not gentlemen admitted that so far as these balances apply to the state I have the honor of representing, they affect her citizens most oppressively. That they set like an *incubus* upon her, producing a stagnation in the culture and improvement of her lands, in the increase of the trade and commerce, and thereby checking the vital current of the country. And when the United States reap no benefit, will gentlemen say it is politic or just to keep them suspended over her head? What is their worth to the United States? If they should be taken to market, what would they bring? Is there a visionary speculator in the land that would bid six pence for them? Do gentlemen contemplate compelling the payment of these balances? The amendment to the constitution, inhibiting the suability of states, has put that remedy out of their reach forever. Do they expect that any state will voluntarily pay them?—No.—If then this is the situation of the business, is the object worth the candle consumed in discussing it on this, or on any other occasion? When the United States cannot pocket a cent from the continuance of these balances, and they are so injurious to some of the states, will the government of the union suffer the interests of those, whom they are bound to protect, to be thus seriously sported with?

By attention to the law passed by Congress on this subject, it will abundantly appear that it was never contemplated that the debtor states should make payment. For it appears to have been believed that every state in the union had exerted itself in the common cause to the utmost; that the blood of the citizens of Delaware had been mingled with the blood of the citizens of South Carolina; that the citizens of the different states had fought, bled and died together; that they had been confined in the same prison ships, had inspired the same impure air, and had died along side of each other, and their bones are now bleaching on the same shores. That such was the intention of the framers of the law appears from this strong circumstance. It provides for the payment of the balances due to the creditor states, while there is no provision for the payment of the balances of the debtor states. For is there in that law any provision to compel the payment? Is there any direction to the Attorney General, or to any other organ of the government, to prosecute the recovery of them? While there is a provision for funding the balances of the creditor states, the law is altogether silent as to any provision to coerce the payment by the debtor states of their balances. Am I not fully justified, therefore, in saying that coercion was never intended?

I fear that on one point I have been misunderstood. I stated yesterday, in the outset of my remarks, that it was my decided opinion, that the commissioners had acted to the best of their judgments and according to honest consciences. I did not impeach their motives. I did not mean to be understood as desiring to touch the settlement they made. I afterwards, however, stated, that from the nature of the country, comprehending an extensive range of communities of various habits, engaged in a revolution in which they were contending for the rights conferred upon them by God and nature, it was impossible, or extremely improbable to avoid the commission of honest mistakes: and that if this reasoning were supported, it would afford an additional reason why the United States should extinguish these balances. But did I question the justice of the proceedings or the motives of those who made the settlement?—I did not. The utmost extent to which I went was that which I have just stated.

There is another point on which my remarks have been misconceived. I observed that by keeping in suspence these balances consequences might take place, by which the interests of states, now hostile to the extinction, might be seriously compromitted. I did not say a bargain and sale might be made of these interests. I hope no such thing as this can take place. But I said a compromise might be effected, and I spoke of what might happen from what has happened. In this I find myself supported by the language of a respectable member in this discussion. I did not use this argument in the way of a threat;—but I stated a fact, and reasoning from experience and from human nature, I calmly enquired of the intelligence of the committee whether such a thing might not possibly occur, and whether the possibility of its occurrence was not a strong reason for removing every thing of the kind.

As long as these balances remain suspended over the heads of the debtor states they will be monuments of the imbecility of the general government, and will, in the eyes of the world, present an unfavorable aspect of the disposition of several of the states to that government. They will shew that several states refuse to comply with the demands of the general government, and that the general government has not power to make them comply. Ought not the government, on this ground alone, when it is acknowledged on all hands that she is unable to exact these debts, and when their continuance operates so injuriously to several of the states, to abandon them?

I will take the liberty of noticing one or two other remarks which have fallen from different gentlemen in the course of this discussion. In this notice it is my wish to be brief, as the subject is so clear to my mind. My only wish is that I were the Representative of one of the *creditor states,* that I might plead with the greater effect the cause of the *debtor states,* believing as I do, that this circumstance would not alter my opinion.

While gentlemen repel the charge made by us against the equitable operation of the settlement of the commissioners they acknowledge that settlement, so far as it regards their own states, to be unjust. Because they have not been allowed a full indemnity for the services and supplies they have rendered they are unwilling to suffer these balances to be extinguished so far as they bear hard upon the debtor states. They say because they have suffered, they desire some companions in their misery. I do not think this a strong argument in their favor. On the contrary I consider it as one of the strongest arguments for an extinguishment, as by the acknowledgment that the operation of the settlement is unequal, it lessens the obligation of the government to adhere rigidly to it.

Let us then put this subject on its true grounds, let us view these balances, as they ought to be viewed, as not worth a pepper corn to the union, as not worth the time that is spent in this discussion, and, under this view, let gentlemen be asked what they sacrifice by giving them up—They abandon nothing that is valuable: while on the contrary they throw away the last apple of discord and pave the way to the final closing of this unpleasant business.

But it is contended that the moment you extinguish these balances, you revive a right in the United States to call on the creditor states for a repayment of the balances funded in their favor. But surely this cannot be considered as a natural inference. Is such a principle assumed as the ground on which our arguments in favor of the extinguishment rest? Have we not, on the other hand, declared and pledged ourselves, that so far as regards the balances reported in favor of the creditor states, it is our desire that they may remain sacred forever. Those balances have been funded, and interest has been and is now receiving on them. They were given for their exertions in the common cause, and ought therefore to remain untouched. Besides in the bill which will be brought into the House should this resolution pass a clause can be inserted making the stock now held by creditor states transferable to whom they please. Forgive us our balances, and you heal the only remaining wound of the revolution. With this view of the subject we ask gentlemen, yielding to a liberal and magnanimous spirit of accommodation, to agree to extinguish that whose continuance cannot benefit them, while it seriously injures us.

[*To be continued.*]

WASHINGTON CITY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13.

We are correctly informed, that in the beginning of November last the Supreme Council of Health at Madrid determined not to prevent the free pratic of vessels from other ports of the United States than New-York, which should bring clean bills of health, and which should have had no communication with those of that port: and that vessels from the port of New York, carrying certificates from the Spanish consul of its health, and that the epidemic has ceased, shall also be admitted—provided that no suspicious circumstance respecting the health of the crew shall have taken place.

CONGRESSIONAL LIBRARY.

This collection already embraces near fifteen hundred volumes of the most rare and valuable works in different languages. We observe with pleasure that authors and editors of books, maps and charts, begin to find that, by placing a copy of their works on the shelves of this institution, they do more to diffuse a knowledge of them than is generally accomplished by catalogues and advertisements.

House of Representatives.

THURSDAY, February 9.

Mr. Thomas laid on the table the following resolution:

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to join with such committee as the Senate may appoint on their part to consider and report, what business is necessary to be done by Congress in the present session, and when it may be expedient to close the same.

A message was received from the Senate informing the House that they had receded from their first amendment to the bill entitled an act giving effect to the laws of the United States within the territories ceded to the United States by the treaty of the 30th of April 1803, between the United States and the French republic; and for other purposes, so far as to agree to the modification and amendment proposed by the joint committee of conference; but that they disagree to the further amendment proposed by the House, extending the right of registering vessels to all the inhabitants of Louisiana on the 30th April last.

The House resumed the consideration of the resolutions reported from the committee of the whole to whom was referred the report of a select committee appointed to enquire into the expediency of amending the several acts providing for the sale of the public lands of the United States.

The first resolution being again read as follows:

Resolved, That the secretary of state, the secretary of the treasury, and the attorney general for the time being, be authorised to receive propositions of compromise and settlement from the several companies or persons claiming public lands in the territory of the United States lying south of the state of Tennessee, and west of the state of Georgia, and finally to adjust and settle the same in such manner, as in their opinion will conduce to the interests of the United States: Provided, that in such settlement, the said commissioners shall not exceed the limits prescribed by the convention with the state of Georgia.—

A motion was made to amend the resolution, by striking out the word "finally," and adding to the end of the resolution, the following words; "And that the said commissioners report to this House such settlement as they may make on this subject, which when confirmed by Congress shall be binding on all the claimants under such companies, and on the United States."

After considerable debate on this amendment, the question was put, and it passed in the negative, when the House adjourned.

FRIDAY, Feb. 10, 1804.

The House resumed the consideration of the unfinished business of yesterday.

On the resolution (above stated) a long and interesting debate ensued on the circumstances attending the Yazoo speculation, and the consequences likely to ensue from the entire disallowance or compromise of the claims of individuals for compensation for lands purchased under the several acts of Georgia, and ceded to the United States; when about six o'clock the question was taken by yeas and nays on the following resolution, and carried in the affirmative—Yeas 62—Nays 56.

Resolved, That the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the attorney general for the time being, be authorised to receive propositions of compromise and settlement from the several companies or persons claiming public lands in the territory of the United States lying south of the state of Tennessee, and west of the state of Georgia; and finally to adjust and settle the same in such manner, as in their opinion, will conduce to the interests of the United States: Provided, that in such settlement, the said commissioners shall not exceed the limits prescribed by the convention with the state of Georgia.

After motions to adjourn and postpone the subject, were made and lost; and the proposition of an amendment of Mr. J. Randolph so to modify the resolution as to inhibit all compensation for lands purchased under the act of Georgia of 1795 was declared not in order, the following resolution was carried:

Resolved, That the time limited by law, for filing claims in the office of the Secretary of State, ought to be extended to the first day of May next.

A motion was then made to refer the two resolutions to a select committee to bring in a bill, which was superseded by an adjournment until Monday.

Notice of the debate on the third reading of the Salary Bill in the House of Representatives.

WEDNESDAY, February 1, 1804.

[Having, some time since, given in full detail, a long debate on this subject, which embraced every important idea, expressed in this debate, on the quantum of compensation allowed to the respective officers, with the exception of the Post Master General, and his assistant, we shall refrain from giving to the public a repetition of old ideas, and confine the notice taken of the debate to the new ground occupied by the opponents of the bill.]

Dr. Leib moved to postpone the bill to the 1st Monday in December next.

This motion was supported by Messrs. Gregg, Leib, J. Clay, Elliot, Thatcher, Elmer & Sloan; and opposed by Messrs. Rodney, J. Randolph, Dawson, Smilie, Eustis, Findley, Nicholson and Huger.

The advocates of the motion assigned different reasons for the votes they contemplated giving. Some declared themselves hostile to the quantum of allowance as too high; others considered the apportionment of compensation partial and unequal, and were of opinion that it would be best to defer the entire subject of compensations to the ensuing session, when it might be gone into generally, and a permanent salary given to each officer correspondent to the services rendered by him: But the principal grounds of opposition to the passage of the bill, and in favor of its postponement, were, 1. the rejection of a bill that very session alleged to be substantially the same with that under consideration; and 2. The insufficient and disproportionate salary allowed by it to the Post Master General.

It was declared to be unparliamentary, inconvenient and dangerous, to permit a measure, similar in substance to one previously rejected the same session, to be brought again before the House. To shew that it was unparliamentary sundry precedents were appealed to in the proceedings of the British Parliament, and the invariable practise of Congress was likewise urged; it was said to be inconvenient, from the great waste of time it produced, after a full discussion of any subject; and it was declared to be highly dangerous from the power which it gave a minority at the close of a session to avail themselves of the accidental absence of members, to carry a favorite measure, though opposed by the express sense of the majority at an early period of the session. It was contended that the present bill was substantially the same with that lately before the House, and lost, owing to the disagreeing votes of the two Houses. This was evident from the salaries allowed being precisely similar in both bills; and it was insisted that the limitation of the last bill to three years did not discriminate it from the preceding bill, inasmuch as its effects would be as permanent as those of the former, should it be renewed from time to time.

The insufficient and disproportionate salary allowed the Post Master General was strenuously insisted upon as an argument for postponing the bill. The office, it was alleged, required eminent talents, which the present officer, by the discharge of its duties, had shewn himself fully to possess. Since the year 1799, the duties of the post office department had greatly increased, and called for a remuneration, in some degree, correspondent to them.

The *opponents* of the postponement avowed their impression—an impression