

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, October 12, 1786, from Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W. Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

New York Octr. 12. 1786.

Dear Sir

Since my last I have receiv'd yours of the 9 of July, I advis'd you therein of the progress that had been made by *Mister Jay* in the *Spanish negociation*, that he had brought a *project before Congress for shutting the Mississippi and not for opening it* for the term of *twenty five or thirty years* combin'd with some *commercial stipulations*, the latter to be the price of the former, although admitted they *opened no new port* nor admitted *us into* those now *open upon better terms than those we now enjoyed*. Since this *project* was presented, the *negociation* has been more *with Congress to repeal the ultimata* than *with Spain* to carry *the instructions* into effect. I inform'd you of the proposition from *Massachusetts* for the repeal in Committee of the Whole. This was carried by *Pennsylvania* inclusive *eastward*, *Maryland* inclusive *southward* being against it. *Delaware* was *absent*. In the house we move'd to postpone the report of the Committee in order to take up propositions to the following effect. *That the negociation* as to the *Mississippi* and *the boundaries* to be taken out of the hands of the *Secretary and committed to Carmichael*. The following points to be agreed on thee and afterwards concluded here. 1st that *New Orleans* be made *an entrepot for exports*, that they be shipp'd thence *in the bottoms of American, Spain and France* under the regulations of each party. 2d. That they pay at said port a duty of 2 pr. centm. ad valorem *to the crown of Spain* as a compensation for port duties. 3d.

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That *imports be prohibited*. 4th. That the instructions of Annapolis be reviv'd as *the basis of a treaty of commerce*. 5th. That two additional *commissioners* be *appointed* with equal powers with *the secretary*

to conclude the same. Upon this there was precisely the same division. The question was then taken on the report & carried by 7 states. Upon this the following proposition was mov'd, "is the repeal constitutionally carried by 7 states so as to give a new instruction materially different from the former" & set aside by the previous question. We are told he will proceed, but of this have no certain information. It is extraordinary he *should have taken up the subject of trade*, as powers upon principles that applied to *all nations alike* had already been given under a commission which had at the time his were, near one year to run to *form a treaty with Spain*, which were not repeal'd by these nor the subject mention'd except by a distant implication. I do suspect the business rests for the present untill the new *Delegates* take their seats, in which case *he* will be govern'd by circumstances. I suspect the point will ultimately be carried, but his is yet doubtful. I forgot above to mention the *negotiation* was to have been carried on in our propositions under *the mediation of France*. I sit out tomorrow for Virginia with Mrs. Monroe by land. My residence will be for the present in Fredericksburg. My attention is turn'd to Albemarle for my ultimate abode. The sooner I fix there the more agreeable it will be to me. I should be happy to keep clear of the bar if possible & at present I am wearied with the business in which I have been engag'd. It has been a year of excessive labor & fatigue & unprofitably so. What you find in

the journals, especially the regulation of the coin, pass'd upon the report of the Board of treasury without examination, or with very little. Our minds were generally at the time otherwise engag'd. Mr. Madison and myself have been desirous if possible of forming an engagement for land in this State *which would hereafter put us at ease*. He promise'd me *to advise you* of it, *and to tell you* of our little plan. If *it were an object with you to your property* in my estimation a better opportunity cannot present itself. I shall write you more fully on my arrival home on many public affairs, which at present I have not leasure for.

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Tell Short he has the friendship of the delegation & always will have it. No appointment of secretary of legation will take place to that court & if one did he would have the good wishes of our State. I am affectionately your friend & servt.,

Jas. Monroe

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress). Words in italics were written in cipher by Monroe.