

Thomas Jefferson to Wilson Cary Nicholas, February 28, 1807, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO WILSON CARY NICHOLAS J. MSS.

Washington, February 28, 1807.

Dear Sir, —Your letter of Jan 20 was received in due time. But such has been the constant pressure of business, that it has been out of my power to answer it. Indeed, the subjects of it would be almost beyond the extent of a letter, and as I hope to see you ere long at Monticello, it can then be more effectually done verbally. Let me observe, however, generally, that it is impossible for my friends to render me ever so acceptable a favor, as by communicating to me, without reserve, facts & opinions. I have none of that sort of self-love which winces at it; indeed, both self-love & the desire to do what is best, strongly invite unreserved communication. There is one subject which will not admit a delay till I see you. Mr. T. M. Randolph is, I believe, determined to retire from Congress, and it is strongly his wish, & that of all here, that you should take his place. Never did the calls of patriotism more loudly assail you than at this moment. After excepting the federalists, who will be 27., and the little band of schismatics, who will be 3. or 4. (all tongue), the residue of the H of R is as well disposed a body of men as I ever saw collected. But there is no one whose talents & standing, taken together, have weight enough to give him the lead. The consequence is, that there is no one who will undertake to do the public business, and it remains undone. Were you here, the whole would rally round you in an instant, and willingly co-operate in whatever is for the public good. Nor would it require you to undertake drudgery in the House. There are enough, able & willing to do that. A rallying

Library of Congress

point is all that is wanting. Let me beseech you then to offer yourself. You never will have it so much in your power again to render such eminent service.

Accept my affectionate salutations and high esteem.