

justice. I find that the fetter originally put on the Deputies from that State to the Convention was taken off in consequence of the recommendatory act of Congress, and that the commission was adjusted to that act.

Connecticut has not yet been in Assembly, and, of course, has not decided on the Convention. I am told the changes which are taking place in her elections are far from strengthening the probability of her concurrence.¹⁴⁴

TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

New York, April 23, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

Congress have agreed to Mr. Jay's report on the treaty of peace, and to an address which accompanies it. Copies of both will no doubt be sent you from his Department. The Legislature of this State, which was sitting at the time, and on whose account the acts of Congress were hurried through, has adjourned till January next, without deciding on them. This is an ominous example to the other States, and must weaken much the claim on Great Britain of an execution of the treaty on her part, as promised in case of proper steps being taken on ours. Virginia, we foresee, will be among the foremost in seizing pretexts for evading the injunctions of Congress. South Carolina is not less infected with the same spirit. The present deliberations of Congress turn on, first, the sale of the Western lands; secondly, the government of the Western

settlements within the Federal domain ; thirdly, the final settlement of the accounts between the Union and its members ; fourthly, the treaty with Spain.

1. Between six and seven hundred thousand acres have been surveyed in townships, under the land ordinance, and are to be sold forthwith. The place where Congress sit is fixed for the sale. Its eccentricity, and remoteness from the premises, will, I apprehend, give disgust. On the most eligible plan of selling the unsurveyed residue, Congress are much divided ; the Eastern States being strongly attached to that of townships, notwithstanding the expense incident to it ; the Southern being equally biassed in favor of indiscriminate locations, notwithstanding the many objections against that mode. The dispute will probably terminate in some kind of compromise, if one can be hit upon.

2. The government of the settlements on the Illinois and Wabash is a subject very perplexing in itself, and rendered more so by our ignorance of many circumstances on which a right judgment depends. The inhabitants at those places claim protection against the savages, and some provision for both criminal and civil justice. It appears also that land-jobbers are among them, who are likely to multiply litigations among individuals, and, by collusive purchases of spurious titles, to defraud the United States.

3. The settlement of the public accounts has long been pursued in varied shapes, and with little prospect of success. The idea which has long been urged by some of us, seems now to be seriously embraced, of establishing a plenipotentiary tribunal for

the final adjustment of the mutual claims, on the great and simple principle of equity. An ordinance for this purpose has been reported by the Treasury Board, and has made some progress through Congress. It is likely to be much retarded by the thinness of Congress, as indeed is almost every other matter of importance.

4. The Spanish negotiation is in a very ticklish situation. You have been already apprized of the vote of seven States last fall for ceding the Mississippi for a term of years. From sundry circumstances it was inferred that Jay was proceeding under this usurped authority. A late instruction to him to lay the state of the negotiation before Congress has discovered that he has adjusted with Guardoqui an article for suspending the use of the Mississippi by the citizens of the United States. The report, however, leaves it somewhat doubtful how far the United States are committed by this step, and a subsequent report of the Secretary on the seizure of Spanish property in the Western country, and on information of discontents touching the occlusion of the Mississippi, shews that the probable consequences of the measure perplex him extremely. It was nevertheless conceived by the instructed delegations to be their duty to press a revocation of the step taken, in some form which would least offend Spain, and least irritate the patrons of the vote of seven States. Accordingly a motion was made to the following effect—that the present state of the negotiation with Spain, and of the affairs of the United States, rendered it expedient that you should proceed, under a special com-