

To Daniel Smith

PHILADELPHIA, Dec 18, 1796.

Sir—

At this early period of our session you cannot expect from me much news of a legislative nature. I only now write to show you with what pleasure I embrace every leisure moment to communicate to my friends and fellow-citizens what news I may be in possession of that may be useful or grateful to receive.

The first thing that took up the attention of the House after our meeting and receiving the President's communication, was to draft an answer to it, the discussion of which * * * * view and with it introduced a considerable debate and warmth, in which British influence showed itself in plain colors and the dislike to the French nation was discovered. I cannot help remarking that it appears evident from the President's speech (which I here inclose and also the answer) that the President has greater attachments for the British Government than that of the French nation. It would appear from his answer that Britain is perfectly at peace with us, committing no depredations on our commerce, impres[s]ing none of our seamen, and that France is the only depredator; when every day's paper proves the fact that Britain captures twenty American vessels for one captured by the French. I cannot help remarking to you the delicate situation into which we are brought by the Administration of the American Government for these four years past, but on the eve of war with the French nation on the one hand, or a breach of treaty with Great Britain on the other. To prove this I will only remark that a decree of the convention of France has been officially transmitted to our Secretary of State, declaring that she will treat neutral flags in the same manner neutral flags will suffer themselves to be treated by Great Britain. This is to be the last official communication from the French Minister, as the functions of his office has been suspended by the Directory of France, and will not be restored until the American conduct is changed with respect to France. That great and illustrious chieftain of America has forgot the services of the French nation rendered in the American revolution; he has forgot those arms that aided in an eminent degree in bringing about that event that immortalized the name of Washington—the American independence and the capture of Cornwallis. I view the present as a solemn crisis in the American history. I am also of a belief that nothing can ward off the horrid scene of war unless Jefferson should be elected President, of which I have but very little hope. Did I say war? In that I may be premature, but at any rate I may say if war should not ensue, our commerce will become

the prey of all nations or be shut up in our own ports. Thus we see the benefit resulting from the treaty with Great Britain and the whole cause of our present gloomy situation; there we saw American dignity humbled at George Rex's throne. View the answer to the President's speech; you will see the majesty of the people prostrate at the feet of their servant, George Washington, anointing him with the most fulsome adulation for no other merit than performing the constitutional duties of his office. I never like to see the creator worshipping the created.

You will, I hope, pardon the writing, diction and spelling of this letter. I have no time to correct it.

I have just to name to you that Mr. Allison has not forwarded you any money by Mr. Tark. He says he will send it by me, but of that I doubt very much. The business of * * * campaign and New York will be brought before the House next week. My compliments to your lady and Mr. George Smith. Please to tell my fellow-citizens in your quarter that I cannot write every person without neglecting the interest of my country, but whenever time will admit I will give the news of the place.

I am, sir, with sentiments of esteem, Yours, sincerely,

ANDREW JACKSON.

New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, January 5, 1879.