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JOURNALS OF THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

1774–1789

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Volume V. 1776

June 5–October 8

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WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1906

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14, 1776

A letter of the 12th, from General Washington, with a general return of the army at New York, and sundry other papers enclosed, being received, was read:[1]

Also, sundry letters from England being received, were read.

Resolved, That the letter from General Washington, with the papers enclosed, be referred to the Board of War.

On request of the delegates of New Jersey,

Resolved, That the tutors in Princeton college be detained from going to the flying camp, and that the said tutors be directed to continue in the said college exercising their several functions.

The committee appointed to devise a plan for encouraging the Hessians, and other foreigners, to quit the British service, brought in a report, which was taken into consideration; Whereupon, the Congress came to the following resolution:

Whereas it has been the wise policy of these states to extend the protection of their laws to all those who should settle among them, of whatever nation or religion they might be, and to admit them to a participation of the benefits of civil and religious freedom; and, the benevolence of this practice, as well as its salutary effects, have rendered it worthy of being continued in future times.

And whereas, his Britannic majesty, in order to destroy our freedom and happiness, has commenced against us a cruel and unprovoked war; and, unable to engage

[1] The letter of Washington is in the *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 152, II, folio 371. It is printed in *Writings of Washington* (Ford), IV, 337.

Britons sufficient to execute his sanguinary measures, has applied for aid to certain foreign princes, who are in the habit of selling the blood of their people for money, and from them has procured and transported hither considerable numbers of foreigners.

And it is conceived, that such foreigners, if apprised of the practice of these states, would chuse to accept of lands, liberty, safety and a communion of good laws, and mild government, in a country where many of their friends and relations are already happily settled, rather than continue exposed to the toils and dangers of a long and bloody war, waged against a people, guilty of no other crime, than that of refusing to exchange freedom for slavery; and that they will do this the more especially when they reflect, that after they shall have violated every Christian and moral precept, by invading, and attempting to destroy, those who have never injured them or their country, their only reward, if they escape death and captivity, will be a return to the despotism of their prince, to be by him again sold to do the drudgery of some other enemy to the rights of mankind.

And whereas, the parliament of Great Britain have thought fit, by a late act, not merely to invite our troops to desert our service, but to direct a compulsion of our people, taken at sea, to serve against their country:

Resolved, Therefore, that these states will receive all such foreigners who shall leave the armies of his Britannic majesty in America, and shall chuse to become members of any of these states; that they shall be protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and be invested with the rights, privileges and immunities of natives, as established by the laws of these states; and, moreover, that this Congress will provide, for every such

person, 50 Acres of unappropriated lands in some of these states, to be held by him and his heirs in absolute property.

Resolved, That the foregoing resolution be committed to the committee, who brought in the report, and that they be directed to have it translated into German, and to take proper measures to have it communicated to the foreign troops. In the meanwhile, that this be kept secret.[1]

Resolved, That Dr. [Benjamin] Franklin be added to the said committee.

The Board of Treasury reported, that there is due,

To Captain William Ross, for subsistence and ferriage of his company of 67 men, of Colonel Smith's batallion, on their march from York county to New Jersey, the the sum of 52 49/90 dollars.

To Daniel Smith, for Captain Thomas Gamble's allowance, from 26th April to 10th August instant, being 15 weeks, at two Dollars per week, the sum of 30 dollars:

To John Davis, for thirty three days hire of a wagon transporting the baggage of Captain Hay's company of Colonel Irvine's batallion, from Carlisle to New York, 110 dollars, and for forty one meals supplied Captain Thomas Turbutt's company of Colonel Wilson's batallion, on

[1] In the Jefferson Papers (5th series, VIII, 4) is the following, written by John Adams, and doubtless intended to serve as a preamble to these resolutions:

"Whereas it is probable, that among the officers of the foreign Troops, now in the Service of the King of Great Britain, there may be many, of liberal Minds, possessed of just Sentiments of the Rights of human Nature and the inestimable Value of Freedom; who may be prompted by the Feelings of Humanity, and a just Indignation at the disgracefull Service to which they are devoted by an infamous Contract between two arbitrary Sovereigns and at the Insult offered to them by compelling them to war against an innocent People, who never offended them, nor the Nation to which they belong, but are only contending for their just Rights; to [abandon] renounce so dishonourable a Service: Therefore,

"*Resolved*, that all such officers who shall [forsake] abandon the Service"