

## The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO JOHN TAYLOR J. MSS.

Philadelphia Dec. 23. 97.

Dear Sir — \* \* \* Our stamp act is put off till July next. The land tax will also be put off. The approach of the elections may have had its weight in both these measures. The affluence of the Treasury has rendered it possible to go on a year longer without a land tax. The questions about beginning a Navy & permitting our merchants (alias the English merchants) to arm & begin the war for us, must of course be discussed, because the speech has recommended these measures. But I see no reason to apprehend any change in the opinion of Congress on these points since the summer session. These therefore & Blount's impeachment will serve to give us an appearance of business for sometime. For an honest truth I believe every man here acknowledges we have nothing to do: that there is literally nothing which the public good requires us to act upon. As we are together, I think myself we ought not to separate till we hear from our envoys at Paris & I think we may expect by the last of January not only to hear from them, but to see what is likely to be the aspect of our affairs with France. If peaceable, I know no reason why we should not go home immediately, & economise something on the daily expenses of our session, which in truth are enormous. The French envoy here tells me he has a letter from his government mentioning that they expect our envoys & that they will be well received. A pamphlet written by Fauchet is come here. I have not read it but I understand that the sum of it is that our Executive are the enemies of France, our citizens generally friendly, but that the mutual interests of both countries require a continuance of friendly intercourse between

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the two republics. A bill extending for three years the law respecting foreign coins has passed the representatives with some difficulty & may possibly fail in the Senate. Whether [ *illegible* ] fears for the mint or whether ground [ *illegible* ] I know not. But if it fails we are left almost without a coin for legal tenders. As you are in session it behooves you to see that your laws fixing the value of foreign coin & making them a tender are in [ *illegible* ] footing. By the constitution Congress may regulate the value of foreign coin, but if they do not do it, the old power revives to the state, the Constitution only forbidding them to make anything but gold & silver coin a tender in payment of debts. This construction is admitted here by persons not disposed to give to the states more powers than they are entitled to. Adieu. Affectionately.