

I also communicate a copy of a letter directed to Mr. Preble from John Anderson, Rufus McIntire, Leonard Jarvis, Cornelius Holland, James Bates and Edward Kavanagh, and a copy of a letter from George Evans, Representatives in Congress from this State in relation to this subject.

(Signed)

SAMUEL E. SMITH.

Council Chamber, February 29, 1832.

XII.

North-eastern
Boundary.

Arrest of E. Greely,
Fortifications.

Sir,

Washington, February 17, 1832.

I DID myself the honour, in my letter No. 6, to lay before you the result of a confidential consultation among the members of our delegation—also certain propositions, which had been made, confidentially, with a view of being communicated to you, in order that they may be laid confidentially before the Legislature of Maine. These propositions, it is true, are, as is usual, in the first instance, made informally, in order to see whether they would be met in a spirit of reciprocity and accommodation, and were carried so far as to suggest the name of an individual to act on the part of the United States, * * * * an individual whom I know to be personally well disposed. I am, therefore, a little surprised at the objection suggested in the letter of Mr. Evans in regard to form; and, as to the mode of conducting the business, if the Legislature should think favorably of entertaining the propositions at all, that suggested by Mr. Evans is only calculated to embarrass and not to bring matters to an amicable termination. If the Legislature reserve to itself, as proposed, the right of ratification, it reserves all that any Government ever reserves. In regard to Massachusetts, her interests must be respected of course. No one could desire to have it otherwise. She could be indemnified by other lands in Maine, or in such form as Maine and herself may agree, but surely she cannot expect to be consulted on the question, whether Maine will enter upon a negotiation to cede her own jurisdiction to the United States. Referring you, however, to the letter of Mr. Evans, a copy of which is inclosed, I take the liberty to lay before you some of the views and modes of thinking which seem to be regarded here as deserving consideration.

The prevailing opinion of nearly our whole delegation from the State has been, as I learn, that from the all-absorbing nature of the subjects of discussion and contest, which at this time agitate Congress—from a desire on the part of gentlemen generally to get rid of present and avoid future difficulties—from a mistaken view of what is required by national honor—from considerations such as those suggested by Mr. Tazewell, adverted to in my letter No. 5—from a prevalent belief that the subject matter of the controversy is not worth the hazard of disturbing the peace of the country and jeopardizing its national and commercial interests; and I will add, on my own responsibility, from the extreme remoteness of our situation—our infancy as a State, and the consequent very limited influence and consideration Maine enjoys, notwithstanding the acknowledged personal respectability and merit of our present delegation, Maine would probably, ultimately, be obliged to submit, however she may resist the idea, to a modification of her boundary line, and that afterwards her only practicable remedy would be an application or petition to Congress for indemnity. But to have our territory wrested from us would be too humiliating; and after having been compelled to submit to the violation of our State rights, to prefer a petition for indemnity would, in my apprehension, be at least a mortifying state of things. Besides, it is certain there are members of Congress even now, who say they would not allow to Maine one single cent. This covering, such as it is, for our wounded State pride and violated State rights, in the form of an indemnity, therefore might be withheld, or if any thing were offered it might be some miserable bagatelle in amount, more offensive than a total refusal. In a word, the injury being consummated upon us, I could not but consider, whatever may be urged to the contrary by Mr. Evans, that we should be wholly at the mercy of Congress, with nothing left us but a sense of our injury and the right of complaining. These views are not very flattering to our State pride, but let us not suffer our honorable feelings to mislead our judgment, or prevent us from seeing things as they exist. It is not a matter of private interest, in which we may indulge our personal feelings without being responsible to any one. It is the interests of the State which are committed to its functionaries. In the course suggested by the propositions communicated to you, it appears to me Maine is treated with courtesy and respect. She does not make the proposition—she is invited to negotiate. Her wrongs are in effect admitted—her nationality is appealed to. She is not asked to yield to foreign encroachment or usurpation. She is requested to consent, in consideration of existing embarrassments and difficulties, which have arisen out of unforeseen causes and providential events, to cede to the United States for a full equivalent and indemnity, to be mutually agreed upon, her claim and jurisdiction to that portion of her territory lying northerly and easterly of the line recommended as a boundary by the Arbiter; and she is requested to do this, in order that the Government of the United States may then proceed to make such a definite arrangement, as shall relieve Maine herself from all farther annoyance and trouble, and promote the interests and consolidate the peace of the union, of which Maine is a member. It is with a view to all these considerations, as I understand, enforced upon their minds by all the means of judging their position affords, that our delegation have united, with the exception of Mr. Evans, in recommending to the favorable attention of