

ADDENDA—APPENDIX L.

Philadelphia,
May 14.

Gérard to Vergennes. No. 83. Deals with despatches Nos. 7 and 8, so far as they have not been answered by other communications. Correcting a statement in an earlier letter he says the intention of Congress is to continue the War rather than accept an honourable peace, without comprising France in it. He is glad to be advised that either of the allies may receive propositions from the common enemy, but that neither may enter upon isolated negotiations. Has impressed this idea strongly on members of Congress. Hopes King is satisfied with manner English commissioners have been dealt with. Believes Congress will remain faithful to its resolution not to treat with English except on conditions: (1) the evacuation of their territory or the recognition of their independence (2) the association of France in the peace. Thinks it might be dangerous to press too strongly upon the Americans the desirability of relinquishing the idea of conquering Canada. The most reasonable among them are not equal to such moderation. The King would do well to rely upon the impossibility of the Americans succeeding in this enterprise themselves, and trust to the skill of his agent to evade the American demand for French co-operation. Washington has probably some inkling of France's views, but he certainly will make no ill use of his surmises. Gérard is following instructions and eluding schemes presenting themselves every now and then, for an attack on Halifax. Congress pleased with approval of King, respecting its conduct towards Burgoyne's army. Majority of states will refuse to continue the war simply on the question of the fisheries. Principal ground for fear, in Gérard's opinion, is the weakening or even dissolution of confederation when common peril passes. Gérard impresses on Congress that Great Britain is about to push the campaign vigorously. This is necessary as Opposition continue to evade resolutions of Congress as to strengthening the army. Depreciation of the paper money, which is the scourge of America. Lee and one or two of his friends persist in maintaining that the articles advanced by Beaumarchais must be regarded as gifts and that France would not dare to refuse further succour nor even to make War for the fisheries. The other members treat these views with contempt. There is desire that France should guarantee loans of Congress. Gérard recommends this. He is intimating that there are negotiations on foot between Spain and England, in order to bring Congress to a decision. Congress would unanimously reject a long truce. Its acceptance of the truce might be brought about, however, by obtaining England's acceptance of it, as the desire in America for peace is so strong, that if the alternatives were an assured truce for long period or continued war, they would probably decide for former. As to Franklin, Gérard is persuaded that if Lee were out of the way, Franklin would be recalled. Gérard paves the way for greater freedom of action on part of France by warning members of the consequences of their dilatoriness. Intimates that if Americans insist on conditions in treaty with England, which go beyond their independence, they may not find themselves supported by France, as the latter country looks to the terms of the Alliance alone for its guidance. He has to deal with a set of ill intentioned sophists who would take advantage of