

GEORGE WASHINGTON

A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

PRIMARY SOURCE WORKSHEET

“REPORT ON MANUFACTURERS,” *ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 2ND CONG., 971–72.*

In *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774–1875* (online exhibition), The Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw>.

971

APPENDIX.

972

Estimates of Appropriations.

| EXTRAORDINARIES. | |
|--|------------------------|
| For discharging certain liquidated claims on the United States - | 117,625 70 |
| To making good deficiencies in the Civil List establishment - | 49,043 79 |
| Clerks of Courts, jurors, witnesses, &c. - | 5,000 |
| Maintenance of light-houses and repairs - | 16,000 |
| Keeping prisoners - | 4,000 |
| Arranging the public securities - | 2,450 |
| Purchase of hydrometers - | 1,000 |
| Building and equipping ten cutters - | 2,000 |
| | \$197,119 49 |
| WAR DEPARTMENT. | |
| Stated annual expenses | 357,731 61 |
| Annual allowance to invalids - | 87,463 60½ |
| For former deficient appropriations - | 47,829 84 |
| Indian Department - | 39,424 71 |
| | \$532,449 76½ |
| Total | \$1,058,222 81½ |

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Register's office, Nov. 4, 1791.
JOSEPH NOURSE, *Register.*

REPORT ON MANUFACTURES.

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, in obedience to the order of the House of Representatives of the 15th day of January, 1790, has applied his attention, at as early a period as his other duties would permit, to the subject of Manufactures; and particularly to the means of promoting such as will tend to render the United States independent of Foreign Nations, for military and other essential supplies. And he thereupon respectfully submits the following Report:

The expediency of encouraging manufactures in the United States, which was not long since deemed very questionable, appears at this time to be pretty generally admitted. The embarrassments which have obstructed the progress of our external trade, have led to serious reflections on the necessity of enlarging the sphere of our domestic commerce: the restrictive regulations, which in foreign markets abridge the vent of the increasing surplus of our agricultural produce, serve to beget an earnest desire that a more extensive demand for that surplus may be created at home. And the complete success which has rewarded manufacturing enterprise, in some valuable branches, conspiring with the promising symptoms which attend some less mature essays in others, justify a hope that the obstacles to the growth of this species of industry are less formidable than they were

apprehended to be; and that it is not difficult to find, in its further extension, a full indemnification for any external disadvantages which are or may be experienced, as well as an accession of resources favorable to national independence and safety.

There still are, nevertheless, respectable patrons of opinions, unfriendly to the encouragement of manufactures. The following are, substantially, the arguments by which these opinions are defended:

“In every country, (say those who entertain them,) agriculture is the most beneficial and productive object of human industry. This position, generally, if not universally true, applies with peculiar emphasis to the United States, on account of their immense tracts of fertile territory, uninhabited and unimproved. Nothing can afford so advantageous an employment for capital and labor, as the conversion of this extensive wilderness into cultivated farms. Nothing, equally with this, can contribute to the population, strength, and real riches of the country.”

“To endeavor, by the extraordinary patronage of Government, to accelerate the growth of manufactures, is, in fact, to endeavor, by force and art, to transfer the natural current of industry from a more to a less beneficial channel. Whatever has such a tendency, must necessarily be unwise: indeed it can hardly ever be wise in a Government to attempt to give a direction to the industry of its citizens. This, under the quick-sighted guidance of private interest, will, if left to itself, infallibly find its own way to the most profitable employment; and it is by such employment that the public prosperity will be most effectually promoted. To leave industry to itself, therefore, is, in almost every case, the soundest as well as the simplest policy.”

“This policy is not only recommended to the United States by considerations which affect all nations; it is, in a manner, dictated to them by the imperious force of a very peculiar situation. The smallness of their population, compared with their territory; the constant allurements to emigration from the settled to the unsettled parts of the country; the facility with which the less independent condition of an artisan can be exchanged for the more independent condition of a farmer; these, and similar causes, conspire to produce, and for a length of time must continue to occasion, a scarcity of hands for manufacturing occupation, and dearth of labor generally. To these disadvantages for the prosecution of manufactures, a deficiency of pecuniary capital being added, the prospect of a successful competition with the manufactures of Europe must be regarded as little less than desperate. Extensive manufactures can only be the offspring of a redundant, at least of a full population. Until the latter shall characterize the situation of this country, it is vain to hope for the former.”

“If, contrary to the natural course of things, an unseasonable and premature spring can be given to certain fabrics by heavy duties, prohibitions, bounties, or by other forced expedients, this will only be to sacrifice the interests of the community

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A P R E S I D E N T ' S V I S I O N

QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. The “Report on Manufacturers” was written by the Secretary of the Treasury. Who served in this role in Washington’s cabinet?
2. Who was the intended audience for this report?
3. Why did the author write this report?
4. What action does the author advocate?
5. Why does the author think that his policy will yield favorable results? Be specific.
6. The author alludes to a change in public opinion toward this topic. What is the change he notes, and when did it take place?
7. What insight does this report give us regarding the author’s role in Washington’s administration?
8. List three things this report tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

ACTIVITIES

Use your text and other print and online resources to complete the following activities.

1. During Washington’s presidency, political groups strengthened within his administration. The most notable of these were the Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, and the Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson. Compare and contrast the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans. How were their views on government, the economy, and foreign affairs similar or different? Explain how the “Report on Manufactures” supports Alexander Hamilton’s Federalist ideology.
2. Thomas Jefferson believed the United States should develop as an agrarian nation—that is, as a nation in which farming and agriculture are emphasized. Compare the course of action recommended in the “Report on Manufactures” with what Jefferson would recommend.

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