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Debates in the Pennsylvania Convention, 3 December 1787 (excerpts)

WILLIAM FINDLEY: The manner of numbering the inhabitants is dark—"other Persons" (Article 1, section 2).

Article 1, section 9, 1st clause: Migration, etc. is unintelligible. It is unfortunate if this guarantees the importation of slaves or if it lays a duty on the importation of other persons.

This is a reservation; and yet the power of preventing importation is nowhere given. . . .

ANTHONY WAYNE: What were the Southern States to gain by the Constitution? No restraint in the *Articles of Confederation*. In this [Constitution] the restraint [is] 21 years. A duty amounting to a prohibition. . . .

JAMES WILSON: Much fault has been found with the mode of expression, used in the first clause of the ninth section of the first Article. I believe I can assign a reason, why that mode of expression was used, and why the term "slave" was not directly admitted in this Constitution; and as to the manner of laying taxes, this is not the first time that the subject has come into the view of the United States, and of the legislatures of the several states. The gentleman (William Findley) will recollect, that in the present Congress, the quota of the federal debt, and general expenses, was to be in proportion to the value of LAND, and other enumerated property, within the states. After trying this for a number of years, it was found on all hands, to be a mode that could not be carried into execution. Congress were satisfied of this, and in the year 1783, recommended, in conformity with the powers they possessed under the Articles of Confederation, that the quota should be according to the number of free people, including those bound to servitude, and excluding Indians not taxed. These were the very expressions used in 1783, and the fate of this recommendation was similar to all their other resolutions. It was not carried into effect, but it was adopted by no fewer than eleven out of thirteen states; and it cannot but be matter of surprise to hear gentlemen, who agreed to this very mode of expression at that time, come forward and state it as an objection on the present occasion. It was natural, sir, for the late Convention to adopt the mode after it had been agreed to by eleven states and to use the expression which they found had been received as unexceptionable before. . . .

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