

Outlines of a plan for the establishment of a mint, for the United States

OUTLINES of a PLAN for the Establishment of a MINT, for the UNITED STATES; humbly submitted to CONGRESS.

IF the white inhabitants of the United States be computed at three millions, and six persons be reckoned to a family (which is a reasonable estimate) there are in the American empire 500,000 heads of families.

Allowing $9/90$ *ths.* of a Dollar, in copper coin, to each of these, annually for ten years (in addition to that which is already in the country) a coinage in that metal, to the amount of 50,000 dollars per annum, will be required; amounting, at the termination of ten years, to 500,000 dollars, or one dollar for each family; without taking into consideration the increase of population, during that period.

If such copper coin should be struck as $1/90$ *th.* and $1/180$ *th.* parts of a dollar, the first should weigh 7 *dwts.* 6 *grs.* of good copper, to make twelve of them worth a shilling, Pennsylvania currency, in the same proportion to silver coin, which the copper coin bears in Britain:—for the British tower half-pence pass 20 per cent. above their value, at 90 to the dollar, and their weight is 6 *dwts.* 1 *gr.*

At the foregoing rate, 101,954 *lbs.* avoirdupois-weight of copper will make the value of 50,000 dollars, in coin. But as about one fourth of the weight of the sheet-copper would, in cutting out the coin, be reduced to *size/* or shreds,—and, as such, unfit to be employed at the mint,—one-third more of copper in sheets would be required, namely 135,938 $2/3$ *lbs.* weight, for the coinage of 50,000 dollars value.

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Estimating the sheet-copper at a quarter dollar per *lb.* weight, the cost of it would be 33,984 60/90 *ths.* dollars.

The following statement will shew the advantages to be derived from this coinage, viz.

300	doll	Dollars	90	ths.	First cost of the copper	33,984	60
					Rent of the mint, per annum		
300					Master-worker, do.	1000	
					Two moneyers, at two coining-presses, each	400	dolls.
					per ann.	800	
					Six men at do. à 250 dolls. per ann.	1500	
					Four do. at two cutting-presses, each	300	dolls. per ann.
					1200		
					One porter, per ann.	250	
					Firewood and candles	166	60
					Extra expences—suppose	93	30
					Expences of coinage	39,294	60
					From which deduct the value of 33,984 2/3 <i>lbs.</i> wt. of size	l, estimating it at 18/90 <i>ths.</i> dollr. per <i>lb.</i>	6,794 60 32,500
					Brought over	32,500	

MINT-OFFICE. Director of the Mint, per ann. 2,666 60 Clerk to do. do. 500 * Assay-master do. 1,333 30 Clerk to do. do. 500 Cashier of the mint, do. 2,000 Clerk to do. do. 500

* But, as it is proposed, that only *copper* coin should be struck, the *first* year, the salary assigned to the *Assay-master* might, that year, be appropriated to the purchase of presses, dyes, and other apparatus for the mint.

Total expences of coinage, per ann. 40,000 Clear profit, after defraying all charges of the same, 10,000 The sum to be coined, annually, 50,000

By the foregoing estimate it appears, that no less a sum than 10,000 dollars might be paid, annually, into the treasury of the United States, during the period of ten years, on the coinage of † 50,000 dollars (value) in copper, each year. By this means, also, the sum of 16,015 30/90 *ths.* dollars would be annually added, for ten years successively, to the circulating medium of the United States,— *if even gold and silver were to be sent abroad, for all the copper which the coinage would require*;—besides the value of 6,794 60/90 *ths.* dollars in copper (the *size*) per annum; which, in this case, would be acquired by the country, and might be employed in various useful manufacturers; or else be formed again into sheet-copper, for the mint.

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† The proposer of this plan is of opinion, that double this sum might be annually struck in copper, without the least danger of overcharging circulation with small change:— provided the whole of the *profit*, on the *additional* 50,000 dollars, were to be applied to the purchase of *gold and silver bullion*, and making it into *coin*. In this case, all the advantages before mentioned would be increased in proportion; and, if even 10 per cent. were to be deducted from the profits, arising from the coinage of the *additional* sum of 50,000 dollars in copper, in order to defray the charges of such silver and gold coinage, *Congress* would, notwithstanding, have a neat profit of 9000 dollars, per annum. for the term of ten years.

When the American copper-coin is to be struck, it will be necessary, that the genuine British half-pence, or coppers, should pass current here, at 112 1/2 to the dollar, or 15 to the shilling; which is only 4 1/6 per cent. more than the rate at which they circulate in Britain. The circulation of the Birmingham, and other counterfeit and base copper-coin, should be totally suppressed: whereby an end would be put to the iniquitous trade of importing into this country (or manufacturing here) such base coin, and purchasing gold and silver with it, of near four times its intrinsic value (comparing their nominal sums) for exportation; a trade which is carried to a most alarming height, and attended with very dangerous consequences.

SILVER - COINAGE.

Whenever Congress might judge it expedient to institute a coinage of silver, (which, the proposer of this plan thinks, it would be adviseable to do, in one year, after the commencement of the copper-coinage) it might be conducted under the direction of the same *officers*, as the copper-coinage.

One hundred and fifty thousand pieces of silver, each equal to 60/90 *ths.* of a dollar, and the same number of pieces, each worth 30/90 *ths.* of a dollar, might be made into coin at the mint, from bullion, in one year; by the same number of hands and presses, employed in the copper-coinage;—computing each of the coining-presses to issue a piece per minute; including all the process of the coinage. And, allowing the same salaries and wages (exclusive of the clerks) with an addition of 2190 dollars for *extra* expences, that

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might occur on *this* department of the mint, (otherwise to be reserved as a fund for national purposes) the charge attending the coinage of 150,000 five-shillings pieces, and the same number of two-shillings-and-six-pence pieces (equal to 150,000 dolls.) would amount to 7,500 dollars; or 5 per centum.

But this calculation is made on the supposition, that the silver to be coined is of equal fineness with the British coin; that is, to silver *bullion* of the *sterling standard*, as 222 to 230.—

The five-shilling piece should weigh 11 *dwt.* 14 *grs.* $\frac{14}{20}$ *ths.* to be of equal fineness and value with the British silver coin.—Twelve ounces of bullion silver are coined into 62 shillings sterling: at which rate, the English *crown-piece* weighs 19 *dwt.* 8 $\frac{16}{31}$ *gr.* The *current* value of it, is 5 shill. sterling; and the value of the same, *as bullion*, at 5 shill. sterling per ounce, is 4 shill. $10 \frac{1}{16}$, very nearly. The *current* value of the English *half-crown piece, coined*, is $\frac{2}{6}$ sterling, and the value of the same, *as bullion*, is $\frac{2}{s}$ [hillings] $\frac{1}{32}$ sterling. The *current* value of the English *shilling-piece*, is 12 *d.* sterling: the value *in bullion* is $11 \frac{49}{80} \frac{17}{6}$ *d.* sterling, and the weight 3 *dwt.* $20 \frac{9}{10}$ *gr.* The standard for *sterling silver plate* is 11 *oz.* 10 *dwt.* of *fine* silver and 10 *dwt.* of alloy, to the pound weight Troy: and, for *sterling silver coin*, is 11 *oz.* 2 *dwt.* of fine silver and 18 *dwt.* of alloy, to the pound Troy; which has been the standard for silvercoin in England, since the 43d. of Elizabeth. Fine silver, then, is to sterling silver bullion or plate as 240 to 230; and to the British coined silver as 240 to 222; consequently an English crown-piece is to sterling uncoined silver, in fineness, as 222 to 230; and therefore $96 \frac{120}{230}$ parts of sterling silver bullion, and $3 \frac{110}{230}$ parts of copper make 100 parts of metal of the same standard, with respect to fineness, when blended together, as the English crown-piece.

If, then, the sum of 150,000 dollars should be coined, in silver, from metal of the *sterling bullion standard*, there must be mixed with 10508 *lb.* 3 *oz.* 0 *dwt.* 7 *gr.* $16 \frac{120}{230}$ *mi.* of *such* silver, and alloy of 378 *lb.* 8 *oz.* 2 *dwt.* 4 *gr.* $3 \frac{110}{230}$ *mi.* Troy-weight, in copper, amounting, in the whole, to 10886 *lb.* 11 *oz.* 2 *dwt.* 12 *gr.*

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The saving on the coinage of the sum of 150,000 dollars out of sterling silver bullion, in preference to the recoinage of sterling silver money, or other coin of the same fineness, would be about 4780 dollars; after deducting the value of the alloy. Should the mint, therefore, give for *silver-plate*, of the sterling standard, weight for weight in *silver-coin*, the coinage of the plate would not cost 2 per cent.

If the English silver coin in circulation amongst us, which is all exceedingly deficient in weight, were to pass for no more than its *intrinsic* value, as bullion, the further importation of such light silver would be prevented; and considerable sums of it, already in the country, would be carried to the mint for recoinage. Sir Isaac Newton observes, in his representation to the Lords of the Treasury, respecting the coin, that in the last year of King William, the Louis d'ors of France, which were worth but 17 shillings and three farthings, sterling, a-piece, passed in England for 17S 6 sterling. Of this he gave notice to the Lords of the Treasury, in consequence of which the King issued his proclamation, declaring they should go but for 17S ; and thereupon, says Sir Isaac, they came to the mint, and £. 1,400,000 were coined out of them. Had Congress a coin of their own, the current value of foreign coins might be regulated by proclamation.

All persons, bringing silver bullion or plate to the mint, should be obliged, as in England, to receive one tenth part of the value in copper coin; provided the sums, so brought, be under one hundred pounds, at the rate of 7/6 to the dollar.

GOLD-COINAGE.

Fine gold is to *English crown-gold*, as 12 to 11. The English standard for *gold* is 22 carats fine; or 22 parts of fine gold and 2 parts of copper; which, being mixed together, is esteemed the *true standard for gold coin*: but gold is not *the standard*, as *silver* is.

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Gold of this fineness is worth, here $80/90$ *ths.* of a dollar, per pennyweight; and all French, Spanish, British and Portuguese gold coin, is received and paid, in Philadelphia, at that rate.

Twelve ounces of gold are coined into $44 \frac{1}{2}$ English guineas, each weighing 5 *dwts.* $9 \frac{9}{20}$ *gr.* The amount of $44 \frac{1}{2}$ guineas is $207 \frac{60}{90}$ *ths.* dollars; which sum being divided by 12 (the number of ounces of gold in $44 \frac{1}{2}$ guineas) leaves a quotient of $17 \frac{55}{180}$ *ths.* dollars, equal to the present standard price of gold, *in Britain.* But gold being worth $80/90$ *ths.* of a dollar, per pennyweight, here; a guinea, if valued at $4 \frac{60}{90}$ *ths.* dollars, should weigh only 5 *dwts.* 6 *gr.* At the same rate, a gold coin, whose current value, with us, would be 5 dollars, should weigh 5 *dwts.* 15 *gr.*

If gold piece, equal to five dollars each, were to be struck, 50,000 of these might be coined, in four months, by the same number of hands and at the same expence, proportioned to the time, that the silver or the copper-coinage would require; which would make the charge thereof but one per centum.

Hence it appears, that the sum of 10,000 dollars, arising from the coinage of copper, and payable annually into the treasury of the United States, would defray the charges of coining the sum of 150,000 dollars in silver, and 250,000 dollars in gold, each year, according to the * plan herein proposed.

* Congress having resolved, that the copper-coin, to be issued, shall be in 100 and 200 parts of a dollar, the foregoing calculations may be easily accommodated thereto.

Agreeable to the foregoing calculations, if 100,000 dolls. were to be struck annually, in copper-coin, instead of 50,000; it has been shewn, that there would be a neat gain of 9000 dolls. to Congress, each year; after allowing a deduction of 10 per cent. (from the profit produced by the coinage of 50,000 dolls value, in copper) for the purchase of gold and silver bullion, and making it into coin. It has been observed, that the cost of making

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coin, from silver of the *sterling coin standard*, would amount to five per cent. only.—The proposer of this plan would, therefore, recommend—that the *other 5 per cent.* should be given as a *bounty* for all silver, not under this standard, and for gold of 22 carats fine, (not exceeding in either, or both, the sum of 9000 dolls.) which should be brought to the mint, to the amount of at least 20 dollars by any one person, and exchanged for copper-coin:—on condition, however, that such gold and silver should not consist of *money*. This, it is presumed, will have a considerable effect, in bringing plate and bullion to the mint.

With respect to the copper-coinage, it is further observable, that if the metal, requisite for the coinage, were purchased in the United States, instead of being imported for the purpose, the advantages to the country would be much greater.

Philadelphia, August 22, 1785.

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