

half by the first day of March next ensuing, on pain in case of failure of having All that shall remain in Sheaves, after the periods above mentioned, seized by the Commissaries and Quarter Masters of the Army and paid for as Straw."

Writing to the Marquis de Lafayette on December 6, Henry Laurens, president of Congress noted that "the consequence of Some Men's Self Interestedness & the gross partiality & inattention of those whose duty it was to Superintend to correct betimes, has already appeared in the loss of Some lives, cruel Sicknesses, boundless desertion & what is to follow, God only knows." Laurens assured Lafayette that Congress was "morally certain of Sending you a pretty large Supply of Blankets & Cloths before Christmas," adding that he hoped they would "reach the Army time enough to give new cause for thanksgiving on the 18th."

Nothing was received by Washington's men before the day of thanksgiving, and avarice led to the engrossment of needed goods everywhere. Writing to Governor Thomas Johnson on December 10 from Frederick Town, Abraham Faw noted that stockings, linen, and cloth were available, but "nothing Can be Done unless the Money is Laid Down on the Nail." On December 20, Congress was forced to "earnestly recommend to the respective legislatures of the United States, forthwith to enact laws, appointing suitable persons to seize and take, for the use of the continental army of the said states, all woollen cloths, blankets, linens, shoes, stockings, hats, and other necessary articles of cloathing, suitable for the army...giving them certificates or receipts for the same." On December 31, Congress ordered its president to write to the president of the Council of Massachusetts regarding the "inexpressible concern" Congress felt at learning of the "extortionate views and demands of the proprietors of cloathing lately purchased or attempted to be purchased within your state," adding that this "irrefragable evidence of the depravity of morals, in so many of the citizens of these states, is a most alarming circumstance." As further evidence of Congress's inability to supply Washington's army, it passed a resolution on December 30 commending the troops under his command for their "soldierly patience, fidelity and zeal, in the cause of their country," ordering "one month's extraordinary pay to be given to each man." Congress added, however, that Washington "be directed to recommend to the officers of the army to draw such a part of their rations only as may be necessary for their respective subsistence, and to receive the residue in money." Congress could print money--on December 3 it authorized the emmission of an additional million dollars of Continental currency--but adequate shelter, clothing, and food neither it nor the respective states could provide.