

had been "of considerable utility to the common cause by several of his Publications," and secured from Congress a salary of \$800 a year to enable him to continue to use his "abilities" in "informing the People and rousing them into action."

In addition to "informing the people and rousing them into action," Paine held various posts in the national and state governments during the war. In 1777 Congress appointed him secretary to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, in which capacity he did much to obtain supplies, a large loan and military assistance from France. The fact that his services were appreciated moved him deeply. In a letter recently discovered, he wrote Franklin in Paris, on October 24, 1778: "I have the pleasure of being respected and I feel a little of that satisfactory kind of pride that tells me I have some right to it."⁴

A month after this letter was written Paine became involved in a controversy with Silas Deane that abruptly brought his pleasure to an end, caused a torrent of abuse and defamation to be heaped on his head, and ultimately cost him his job as secretary to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The crux of the debate between Paine and Silas Deane centred on the question whether the supplies furnished the United States by France before the Franco-American alliance of 1778, through Caron de Beaumarchais, adventurer and playwright, were a gift from the king of France or comprised a loan to the United States. Deane, attempting to profit personally from French aid to the United States and, as it was established later, had conspired with the British (for a considerable sum) against the American Revolution, maintained that the transactions were of a purely commercial nature and demanded payment of a five percent commission on purchases made for the American government. Paine supporting the position of Arthur Lee, also American Commissioner to France, charged that Deane was simply conspiring to defraud Congress of money. On December 14, 1778, in a letter *To Silas Deane, Esq're*, in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, Paine launched his public attack upon Deane. Answers from Deane's supporters followed, and Paine was compelled to continue the controversy. As he did so, however, he was also forced, to prove his contentions, to quote from secret documents to which he had access as secretary of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Soon afterwards he had to resign his post owing to the opposi-

⁴ Dixon Wecter, "Thomas Paine and the Franklins," *American Literature*, vol. XII, November, 1940, p. 313.