

# Transcription of letter to Antoine-Charles Cazenove, Oct 31, 1851 A.L.S

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Washington, October 31st, 1851

J.J. Crittenden

Atty Gen'l of the U.S.

Sir

In reply to your note of this day which I have had the honor to receive, I have to inform you that the privileges of the members of the Congress of the United States, are conferred by the 6th Section of the 1st article of the Constitution in the following language, to wit, "The senators & Representatives shall receive a compensation for their services to be ascertained by law, and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. They shall in all cases, except treason, felony, and breach of the peace be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their term respective Houses, and in going to the returning from the same; and for any speech or debate in either House, they shall not be questioned in any other places."

The privileges conferred by the provisions above recited, are the only constitutional privileges of Member of Congress and these privileges being granted by the Constitution can not be abrogated or taken away by any act of legislation. They are

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permanent & unrepeatable as the Constitution itself.

An act of Congress has conferred upon also the privilege of sending letters by the public mail, free of postage. This, however, is a privilege limited to the time of their continuance in office as members & to meeting of the next Congresses thereafter as this privilege is derived from an act of Congress it may be modified or replaced at the pleasure of Congress.

The members of our Congress have no other privileges than as above stated and these have been conferred not for the purpose of personal distinction as advantage to themselves but upon the principle of promoting the public service.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully

Yours

J.J Crittenden

Monsieur Antoine Chas. Cazenove

Consul of the Swiss Confederation

Alexandria