

CONGRESSIONAL BLOTTENCE.

*Mr. P. Pe's Speech in Senate. on Mr. Hill-house's resolution for raising the Embargo—concluded.*

The gentleman has informed us that Great-Britain can be supplied with cotton from the East-Indies and other countries. I will ask the gentleman if Great-Britain can procure this article from the East-Indies and other countries in sufficient quantity, and on as good terms as from the United States. If she cannot, which I suppose to be the case, she must feel our embargo in her manufactures, one of the vital sources of her strength & prosperity.—We are told that a non-importation act would have no effect, because it could not be enforced, smuggling would be carried on to a very great extent;—that a non-importation act would, like all other laws, be partially violated, was it to be expected.—Every law is violated, but with due vigilance such a measure could be enforced to a very great extent. This measure would not be efficient, says the gentleman, because Great-Britain will find a market for her manufactures in new Spain and South America. I will ask the gentleman, whether South America has not been supplied heretofore with British manufactures to a considerable extent, and does the gentleman seriously believe that she would find a market in that country for the immense quantity of her manufactures hitherto consumed in the United States?

Although the gentleman has not in his resolution to repeal the embargo, proposed a substitute, he intimated in his argument, that we ought to arm our commerce against all nations. I am not prepared to say, that I will adhere to this embargo, as a better can be devised—but before I embrace a substitute, I must be informed, how it is to operate—the gentleman must therefore excuse me for propounding a few questions to him in relation to this measure. I wish to be informed—would not such a measure be war with France and Great-Britain, or should we not by such a measure put it in the power of the commercial interest to embroil us with which nation they pleased? It is probable that our merchants would run the risk of fighting their way to the continent of Europe, with loaded vessels in defiance of the British navy? It is not more probable that G. Britain would have agents in this country to sell licenses to our merchants to trade to the continent, and would not our merchants for their own security, secretly purchase and trade under those licenses? If the object of Great-Britain be a commercial monopoly, and we remove our embargo, would it not be in the power of the British merchants, by a secret understanding with, and the connivance of their government by agents and secret partners in the United States, to carry on the very trade to the continent which Great-Britain interdicts to us? I have been led to make these enquiries by reading the memorial of the merchants of Baltimore, presented to the government in 1806, respecting neutral trade, and which was signed by men of all parties, in which it is positively charged that the object of Great-Britain in harassing our trade was to cripple American commerce and promote her own, and that she granted licenses to neutrals to carry on the trade which she interdicted. I will read it:

"It has been said that, by embarking in the colony trade of either of the belligerents, neutral nations, in some sort, interpose in the war, since they assist and serve the belligerent, in whose trade they embark. It is a sufficient answer to this observation, that the same course of reasoning would prove, that neutrals ought to discontinue all trade whatsoever with the parties at war. A continuance of their accustomed peace trade assists and serves the belligerent, with whom it is continued; and if this effect were sufficient to make a trade neutral and illegal, the best established & most useful traffick would, of course, become so. But Great-Britain supplies us with another answer to this notion,

that our interference in the trade of the colonies of her enemies is unlawful, because they are benefitted by it. It is known that the same trade is and long has been, carried on by British subjects; and your memorialists feel themselves bound to state, that according to authentic information lately received, the government of Great-Britain does, at this moment, grant licenses to neutral vessels, taking in a proportion of their cargoes there, to proceed on trading voyages to the colonies of Spain, from which she would exclude us, upon the condition, that the return cargoes shall be carried to Great-Britain to swell the gains of her merchants, and to give her a monopoly of the commerce of the world. This great belligerent right, then, upon which so much has been supposed to depend, sinks into an article of barter. It is used, not as a hostile instrument, wielded by a warlike state, by which her enemies are to be wounded, or their colonies subdued, but as the selfish means of commercial aggrandizement, to the impoverishment and ruin of her friends; as an engine, by which Great Britain is to be lifted to a vast height of prosperity, and the trade of neutrals crippled, and crushed, and destroyed."

According to the course of reason adopted by the gentleman from Connecticut, the object of Great-Britain in blockading the continent is not to starve it, it must therefore be to secure to herself the benefit of all the commerce carried on with the continental powers. In such a state of things, while those who were trading under the licenses of foreign governments, were making their fortunes, the honest Americans who would not consent to degrade their country by navigating the ocean under the protection of any government but their own, would be plundered by both belligerents. If we are to consider the belligerent nations as pirates, no longer bound by those principles of public law to which civilized nations have hitherto subscribed, and are prepared to purchase our rights on the seas, let us do it as a nation by paying them a sum in gross, and thereby placing our citizens on equal ground. We are told that we can carry on a considerable commerce with countries not within the scope of the decrees or orders of the belligerents;—this argument is specious and captivating; let us examine it; for I felt as much solicitude as the gentleman in opposition to remove this embargo, whenever it can be done with propriety—on this as well as on the subject of an armed commerce, the gentleman will pardon me for requesting information. If we remove our embargo as to Portugal and other places to which our trade is not interdicted, and by a law declare that our citizens shall trade only to those countries permitted by the belligerents, would not that be submission to her orders and decrees, and if we open our ports and restrict our commerce to those countries, could we ever after hope for a relaxation of the orders of council? Would not G. Britain have every inducement to perpetuate such a state of things, which would afford to her the benefits of commerce without its inconveniences? The gentleman from Connecticut has informed us that the object of the administration in adopting the present system, is to put down commerce and promote manufactures. If the administration as any concealed motive for this measure, I am a stranger to it. It is well known that it has been a favorite object with the present administration, to pay the public debt, and it would be strange, indeed, that it should pursue a system which cuts off our only source of revenue. This conjecture of the gentleman is too improbable to require a serious refutation. On the policy of promoting manufactures, I shall make but few remarks, as it will hereafter be a subject of distinct consideration. I have supposed that it would be sound policy in this government to diminish, in some degree, the inducements now held to our citizens to embark in foreign commerce, and induce them to vest their money in the interior—the increase of manufactures would lessen our dependence on foreign nations,

and render us more dependant on each other. There would be more intercourse between the people of the different states, which would tend to nationalize us, and give more strength and permanency to the American union.—To what extent this policy should be carried, I am not now prepared to say. A distinction has been taken between native and foreign commerce, or what is more commonly called, the carrying trade. The policy of encouraging our citizens to participate in the carrying trade, is one thing, our maritime rights is another. The gentlemen in the opposition complain that this measure bears peculiarly hard on the commercial states. On the subject of commerce, as all others of national concern, I am disposed to consider the U. States as an integer, and to forget the lines of partition by which we are separated into different states and districts, for the purpose of internal government—but as the gentlemen have contrasted the commercial with the agricultural states, I am willing to meet them. I had tho't that this measure if its pressure was greater upon one part of the country than another, operated more severely upon the growers of cotton than on any other part of the nation, and they ought, if influenced by pecuniary considerations, to be the first to complain. The people I represent are an agricultural people, and I ask the gentleman of what importance it is to them whether their produce is carried in foreign or American vessels? For what are agricultural people now suffering, but to maintain our maritime rights? Sir, we are willing to discard all calculations of profit or loss, and make a common cause with our brethren of other states, in defence of our national rights and independence.

It appears to me, sir, that the commercial people ought to be the last to complain. Our government has imposed discriminating tonnage duties, to give our own vessels an advantage in our own ports over foreigners. We have remitted the duties on foreign articles imported into the United States, intended for exportation. Our government has evinced every disposition to foster commerce, and maintain our maritime rights. We are told that the people are opposed to this measure. To the voice of a free people, I shall always bow with reverence. But, sir, it ought to be remembered, that in this country, the will of the majority must prevail—it is a fundamental principle of our government, and if we are to judge from recent events, a great majority of this nation are in favor of this measure. We are informed, and it has been intimated on this floor, that rebellion in the eastern states will be the probable consequence of perseverance in this measure. Are we to be driven from the course dictated by the public interest, by alarms of this sort? Are we to be told by a minority that we must recede from the ground we have taken—that we must admit the government has not sufficient energy to enforce its authority, or that they will rebel? Will gentlemen inform us who they are that are prepared to erect the standard of rebellion against their own government, on the very graves of the brave Bostonians, who first raised the standard of American independence? They must be some new people who have obtruded themselves on our shores—they cannot be Americans—I will not think so unworthy of my countrymen—I believe the American people are generally attached to their government. I trust it is but the clamor of the moment, which will cease the moment the will of the government shall be decisively and constitutionally expressed. It has been frequently said that Great Britain is fighting for the liberties of the world—that she is the only barrier between France and universal dominion, and therefore that our weight ought to be thrown into the scale of England, to assist her in this mighty conflict. If our friendship is necessary to England, ought she not to entitle herself to it, at least do us justice, and respect our rights? Shall we submit to insults and indignities from Great-Britain, to induce her to

save us from subjugation by France? Shall we admit, for a moment, that we cannot maintain our independence?—The gentlemen in opposition have protested against submission; they have not declared themselves for war; if they are for it, I hope they will avow it; they have proposed no substitute. I am not prepared to say how long good policy will justify a continuance of the present system; but, sir, I am ready to declare that I will adhere to it, until a better can be substituted. If it be true, as the gentleman from Connecticut has informed us, that the most efficient means of coercing Great-Britain, is to affect her interest, and if it be true that our embargo will compel the West-India planters to convert their sugar plantations into corn-fields for subsistence; if it will produce a scarcity of cotton in Great Britain, or enhance the price—if by a non-importation act we can deprive her of a market for a large portion of her manufactures, the present system, with the addition of a non-importation act, if firmly adhered to, and well executed, may have the desired effect. When I cast my eyes over these states, and observe the freedom and happiness they enjoy, I feel constrained to pause before I consent to take a step which will involve them in the calamities of war. When I consider the peculiar character of the contest between the two great belligerents of Europe, I feel very unwilling to be drawn into the vortex, lest the fate of this happy nation may become too closely connected with the destiny of one or the other of these contending powers. At the same time that I consider it my duty to make war the least alternative, I know the American people would prefer it rather than submit to a sacrifice of their national independence.—The conduct of the belligerents, and the state of our country, furnish strong reasons for believing that the period is not distant, when the alternative must be accepted; if the present system should prove inefficient. I hope I have not, in the warmth of debate, violated that decorum which the dignity of the Senate requires to be observed. I certainly have not intended it. I shall conclude, with requesting gentlemen to reflect, that in this hour of difficulty and danger, unanimity constitutes the basis of our national security.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Mr. RANDOLPH'S SPEECH, On the Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

We have now progressed very far in the fourth week of our session.—We met here at a time when every man in this house and out of it, seemed to vie with his neighbour in the expression of the opinion that this is a momentous crisis. There are few of us, I believe, who have influence enough at home to avoid the censure of their constituents, in case of a failure in a punctual attendance on their duty at the commencement of this session; public expectation was raised to the most painful pitch; and yet one fourth of the time assigned by the constitution for our deliberations has elapsed, and in what situation does the Congress of the United States find itself? Debating what has been termed an abstract proposition. When the report was made, my worthy friend who sits before me, (Mr. Macon,) with his wonted sagacity, saw in that proposition its entire futility. Let me not be mistaken—it is not my intention to deny the truth of the proposition, much less to vote against it; but my friend from Carolina saw that it was not to be made the basis of a future conduct; that in fact, no bill, no measure, nothing substantial could grow out of it. And are we to employ ourselves in this manner, for the amusement of the galleries, of the public of Georgetown, Washington, and its vicinity? When this resolution was introduced by the committee, whose report is now under consideration, I regretted it on a variety of accounts; not only in the same view as my friend before me has taken of it, but for other reasons, I asked myself in the first place, on whom it