

# THE STAR.

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UNITED STATES.



Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Friday, Dec. 30.

DEBATE

On a Resolution to raise, arm and equip, Fifty Thousand Volunteers, to serve for the term of two years.

Mr. EPPES said there was no man who regretted more than himself that at a period when the safety, honour and independence of this country were assailed by external danger; when, under the pressure of a measure resorted to under circumstances of the most urgent necessity, the citizens of this country had manifested a feeling calculated to excite sensations here and elsewhere—that such a period should be seized by gentlemen not to exert their talents in steering the national bark through the billows by which it was surrounded, but in endeavouring to thwart every measure proposed. The gentleman from New York (said Mr. E.) has told us that he will sound the tocsin of alarm to the people. And what is the project of the gentleman himself? Why, he has told you on a former day, openly, honestly and fairly, that he is for war with France; he is willing to pocket all the injuries which we have received from Great Britain, and go to war with France. In vain would the gentleman sound the tocsin of alarm, if this is his project. The people of the United States would not go with him. It is not the sentiment of any portion of our citizens, except of the old Tories of our revolution. He would not be followed by the American people in taking to his bosom a nation which has murdered your citizens, and making war upon a nation which has pillaged your commerce. I cannot reconcile the project with my ideas of moral principle. He would not be followed by the federalists—I cannot believe that those who walked in procession after the body of the murdered PIERCE, could stamp on themselves the character of base hypocrisy, by taking to their bosom the nation which committed the outrage, while the blood of Pierce and a host of other injuries more degrading remain yet unatoned for. All our injuries remain unredressed; not the smallest apology has been made, but the feelings of the country not only disregarded, but insulted by new acts of violence and injustice: The gentleman's project to save the honour of the nation is submission to England and war with France. I pronounce with confidence it is not the sentiment of the American people; the gentleman from New York has taken occasion to introduce the name of Washington. The sentiments which that gentleman has expressed were never those of Washington. He never would have been willing to put chains on his countrymen, to consent to a shackled commerce; to allow foreign nations to say to his country, this far you shall go and no farther. This is not the spirit of Washington. It is not the spirit which produced our revolution—opposition to tyrants and a manly assertion of our rights at every hazard, gave us our rank as an independent nation. The same spirit still pervades our country, and I trust will ever remain. It never, however, has been the policy of this government to rush rashly into war. The history of our country under former administrations demonstrates this fact—and under the administration of Washington as well as under every other, we have borne with patience degrading insult and injury. As to the great regard of former administrations for the personal rights of the citizen, on which the gentleman has dwelt, I shall not go into that part of the subject. In laying an embargo even in the time of Washington, a short resolution was passed in which the power was vested and the execution left to the executive.—This was thought, at that time, very constitutional and proper no doubt, by the federalists. We, however, can frame no constitutional law on this subject, although they could very con-

stitutionally adopt the old maxim, so I will it, and enforce their system.

[Mr. E. here read an extract from a speech, delivered in 1803, enumerating the many insults and outrages offered our Government under the former administrations, to prove that it never has been the policy of this nation lightly to embark in war.]

So far as we have progressed in our present situation, so far as the course pursued was calculated to preserve peace, it was a course which justice and humanity dictated, and which has been approved by the nation. But is there never to be an end to the sufferance of a nation? Is there no time when we shall act? The idea of a permanent embargo—and when on this part of the subject I shall, perhaps, be told as another gentleman was yesterday, that my observations resemble more the slang of an ale house, than the debate of a deliberative body—this idea, I observe, is to be found only in the speeches of those who opposed the measure. Such an idea cannot be inferred from the conduct of members of this House, or from any thing else which has occurred.—It proceeds only from men who from the first moment the measure was laid on your table, endeavoured to paint it in the most odious colours. Immediately after the measure was adopted last winter, what takes place, sir? A man distinguished by the favour of the people, a man advanced in years, the very man who in '98, kept back the dispatches from Mr. Adams, and had almost plunged us into a war with France by this act. What does he do? In 1808 he displays the same spirit of hostility to France, which he manifested in '98; writes a letter in which he attributes the embargo to French influence, to the mandates of Bonaparte. [Mr. Gardener requested the gentleman from Virginia to name him.] "Mr. Eppes. "General Pickering." [It appeared to be doubted whether Mr. Eppes was in order. Mr. Smilie said, that if the gentleman from N. York was permitted to criminate his own government, a reply ought certainly to be allowed.] Mr. Eppes continued. I wish it to be understood by the speaker and the House, that I hold myself responsible to any man who is injured by my observations. No circumstance shall deter me from expressing the truth in relation to our affairs. It is time that the nation should see the strange union of sentiment between gentlemen in opposition and that government which has injured us most. I am responsible for my assertions; I have a right to discharge my duty in that way which I please, and in that way I will. I then say this letter proceeded from the man who in 1798 was willing, was anxious, to involve the United States in a war with France. There was a party in this country in favour of it; and if correctly informed, the man who wrote this famous letter is the head of that very party; a party connected and known under the name of the Essex Junto. This was the first stroke at the embargo, and what took place afterwards? I regret that a gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Livermore is not in his place, whose speech, as delivered to his constituents, was sent here some weeks before our last adjournment, said to have been delivered to the inhabitants of his district, in which he declared that southern members of influence in the republican party here had openly declared to him their hostility to commerce? The gentleman has had the candor to declare that he did not make to his constituents such a statement; but, sir, it was circulated as his speech immediately previous to the election, and although the gentleman never made such a speech, many people in Massachusetts believed that he had not only made the speech, but that it was a deliberate expression of his sentiment. These things justify the statement of the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Story) that misrepresentations had been spread amongst the people. The federal printers have united in giving currency to these misrepresentations. They have even made speeches for the members of Congress; they have made them accuse the majority of Congress of being under French influence. A sentiment of this sort has been given in a speech of the gentleman from N. Y. (Mr. Gardener) though it is denied.

[Mr. Gardener said he never had expressed such an opinion; the speech which he had seen printed, had not conveyed that idea. He never intended to express such an idea; for however he differed in opinion with gentlemen, he never had the slightest suspicion that gentlemen were governed by dishonest motives. He should hold up their course as pernicious to the nation, and never would cease to do so, thus performing a constitutional right, and a duty from which he would never shrink.]

It never has been my habit (continued Mr. Eppes) to attribute to gentlemen improper motives; I never have done so; but the course which has been pursued will give weight to

the opinion already entertained in G. Britain that we are a divided people, that we are divided in opinion on what the gentleman from New York himself has called a self-evident proposition—that the belligerent decrees cannot be submitted to without a surrender of our rights, independence and honour. Are we to be surprised that the people of Massachusetts or of any other part of the United States are agitated when they find men so enlightened as their representatives in Congress telling them that this is to be a permanent system? Do gentlemen really believe that it is our intention to abide by the embargo until our injuries are redressed, be that soon or late? Do they believe that the embargo is all that is to be opposed to insult, injury and blows? Do they believe that we are destitute of sense? I for one, unequivocally deny that I ever had such an idea, or any person with whom I ever conversed on the subject, except the gentlemen who opposed it, to whom it was convenient to represent it as a permanent measure. And whatever gentlemen may say on other subjects, they will do me the justice to say that at the last session I told them my opinion that the period would arrive when the embargo would be removed; and that when it was, there was no other course than war, open and direct, or submission. I defy gentlemen any where to find the embargo considered as a permanent measure, but in their own speeches and the prints of their party.

The circumstances which produced the embargo are well known; but the misfortune is that gentlemen will not state the question fairly, but cover it under a heap of lumber, calculated to conceal from the people the real question. Let the question be fairly put, and there is not a man in America (always excepting old Tories) who would not say that they will resist. What is the real state of our affairs—and I will not stop here to discuss who began first. If we mean to assert and maintain our rights, it is totally immaterial to us who commenced, though on this subject I might refer gentlemen to the letter of Mr. Hammond in 1798, in which he takes the ground now maintained, and asserts the right of Great Britain to blockade the whole of France. The statement of our situation is simply this—Great Britain says if you go to France or her dependencies without a licence from her, your property shall be liable to seizure and condemnation. France says if you have visited Britain or been visited by a Briton, your vessel shall be liable to seizure and confiscation. Now take the dependencies and allies of France and England, and what remains? Your commerce is as completely blockaded by these decrees as the port of Boston was in the revolutionary war—and when gentlemen come forward and tell you that your ships are rotting in your ports, and the country suffering, and attribute this to the embargo, is it fair? Is it manly? Is it not an assertion materially variant from our present situation? I call upon any man, federalist, quid, or of what denomination he may be, to answer whether these decrees have not destroyed our commerce; and yet the destruction is imputed to the embargo. At the time the embargo was laid, our exports amounted to one hundred and eight millions annually. Taking all the countries with whom we could trade, throwing Great Britain out of the question, with whom I contend that no man can be willing to trade under existing circumstances, and our whole commerce does not amount to seven millions and a half—a commerce not equal to one half of the exports from Massachusetts alone; and give Massachusetts her relative share of one fifth of these seven millions of commerce, and this is all she can have to support her seamen, to enrich her merchants whom the embargo is said to have destroyed. This is the real situation of the country. Do the people of the eastern portion of it know it? No, sir, it is kept from them; they cannot find it in the speeches of their Representatives, no, sir, there it is all embargo the favourite hobby horse of federalism.

Having thus attempted to shew that it was not my intention when the embargo was laid to consider it as a permanent measure, I will proceed to state some circumstances which have rendered this measure less operative than it would otherwise have been. The embargo had two objects, to gather in our capital, and to withhold supplies from our enemies. The first object has been completely answered, and there is not a period at which it could be more necessary to adhere to it than at the present moment. To withhold supplies from our enemies is now more important than ever. The nation must be put in a state to meet war.

It is in vain for gentlemen to attempt to elude the people. The decrees of England and France must be withdrawn, or we must fight; it cannot be avoided. We have declared we will not submit, and there is no species of effectual resistance but war.

We have a right to carry our produce to

very place on the globe whose municipal regulations do not forbid it. France has a right to interdict our trade with herself, but none to interdict it with her enemy. Great Britain has a right to exclude us from her ports, but none to compel us to go there. What other course I ask can the United States take but war, or submission to these decrees? Let gentlemen examine the various proposals brought forward. It is immaterial whether we pass a law that we will reduce our trade to the places left by the decrees, or suffer it to be reduced by the decrees themselves. In either case we submit—we allow foreign nations to fix the amount of our commerce—to destroy the fruits of our industry and legislate for us.

Now, Sir, I do not believe that there is a native American in any part of the United States who is disposed to submit, and I rejoice that in this House there is no division of sentiment. Gentlemen have publicly declared that they will not submit. In what form then will they resist? We have tried paper long enough. It is time either to exert the energies of the nation, or to give up our rights and again become the colonies of Great Britain. I am not for that. I have no other interest than that in land, by the produce of which I live. I would sooner let it go in the general wreck of my country, than surrender those rights which are so important to the nation, and which our fathers purchased with their best blood. I am not for disgracing our ancestors who fled from oppression abroad; I am not for proving ourselves a base degenerate offspring.—We possess a country of 2000 miles extent, a population of six million of souls, six hundred thousand men fit to bear arms. If with this, we cannot preserve our independence, we deserve to be kicked out of the territory neck and heels, by those powers whom we have suffered to trample on our maritime rights.

In the course of my remarks, I have noticed the strange union of sentiment between gentlemen in the opposition and the British ministry, on the subject of the embargo.

On this subject, I will read an extract of a ministerial pamphlet.

"Providence has ordained, that nations as well as individuals, should, in a certain degree, be dependent on each other; and the inhabitants of no country can be debarred from their accustomed commercial communications, without being deprived of many advantages and enjoyments. Society being thus constituted, the government that attacks the comfort and happiness of the people, by prohibiting this intercourse, alienates their affections, and consequently holds its authority by a very precarious tenure. When the late emperor Paul entered into the confederacy against Great Britain, his subjects were at once reduced to severe and general distress. Their hemp, their flax, their tallow, their ashes, their iron, their timber, all their great staple commodities, for the sale of which they depended on British purchasers, were left a dead weight upon their hands. If the produce of the land becomes of no value, the land-lord may apply to his tenant for rent in vain. If the vessel can procure no employments he can pay nothing to his lord. Thus the nobles, whose revenues is derived from the rent of their estates, and the labor of their vassals, found themselves involved in the calamity of their inferiors, and were led by common interest, to attempt that revolution, which cost the emperor his crown & his life.

"If any further elucidation of the principle to which this event is ascribed were wanting, it promises to be found in the United States of America; where the cultivators of the soil are deprived of the fruits of their labors, and the merchants of their commercial gains, by the present embargo. This forced state of things, cannot be of long continuance. Already have the Vermonters set the constituted authorities at defiance, and persist in carrying on their trade with the Canadians across Lake Champlain while the Northern States manifest strong symptoms of discontent."

Perhaps I ought to apologise to the representatives from the State of Vermont, for reading a clause speaking particularly of that State, but I assure the gentlemen that it is not my wish to bring the attention of the House to circumstances which have passed there. I view them with that deep regret with which I shall ever view a similar state of things in any portion of the country. I regret that any portion of the people of this country, however they may feel, should not manifest their feelings in that form prescribed by the constitution and the laws. We are told by this pamphlet of true British origin, that the U. States cannot stand this measure; and what are we told on this floor? "You cannot stand it; you are committing suicide on yourselves." All this goes to Great-Britain; what I say never will reach it. All there seen of it will be