

Good old Times

Extracts from the Journal of the Provincial Congress of N. Carolina, held at Hillsborough in 1775. (Continued.)

TUESDAY, SEPT. 5 1775

On motion, Ordered, That the Rev. Mr. P. G. Gillo, Mr. Baker, Mr. Thomas Harvey, Mr. Miles Harvey, Mr. Geddy, Mr. William B. M. J. Somner, and Mr. Matthias B. Pitt, have leave to absent themselves from the service of the congress.

On motion, Ordered, That Mr. Willie Jones, Mr. Nash, and Mr. John Ashe, be a committee of this congress to make an arrangement of Minute men for the safety of the province, and report their proceedings to this congress.

On motion, Ordered, That Mr. Skinner, Mr. Starkey, Mr. Locke, Mr. Caswell, Mr. Thomas Person, Mr. Bourk, and Mr. Coor, be a committee of Ways and Means, and that they make report of their proceedings.

Mr. Caswell, from the committee of Ways and Means, reports as follows, viz.

That it is the opinion of your committee, that the expences of the 1000 men to be raised and paid at the expence of the continent, ought to be defrayed out of the fund provided for that purpose by the Continental Congress; and that the Provincial Congress, or such Officers as they shall empower, do draw for 100,000 dollars immediately, and for other sums as there may be occasion afterwards.

That it is the opinion of your committee, 50,000, be emitted in paper bills of credit, to be applied towards defraying the expence of the Militia and Minute Men, for purchasing Arms and Ammunition, and paying bounties for the encouragement of Manufactures, Expresses and other Contingencies; this sum to be sunk by a tax of two shillings every Year on each taxable person in this province, to commence for the Year 1777, and continue for seven years after its commencement.

R CASWELL, Chairman.

Ordered, The said report be for further consideration.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6. 1775.

Resolved, That Mr. Penn, Mr. Harnett, Mr. Webb, Mr. Blount, Mr. Locke, and Mr. Coor, be a committee to recommend proper persons for commissaries for the several troops.

The aforesaid committee returned, and reported that several gentlemen had offered themselves as candidates, which they approved of, and recommended that the house should make choice of four of the said gentlemen for that purpose.

Mr. Archibald Maclaine, Chairman from the committee appointed for the purpose of preparing a plan for the regulation of the internal Peace, Order, and Safety of this Province, and making such arrangement in the civil police of this Province. &c. laid the same before the congress; which was read.

Ordered, The same be committed to a committee of the whole House tomorrow morning.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 7. 1775.

Report of the committee of ways and means, came to the following resolutions, viz.

Resolved, That a sum not exceeding 125,000 dollars, be emitted by this Congress in bills of credit, for the defence of this colony.

Resolved, That this Province be pledged for the redemption of the bills of credit now directed to be emitted.

Resolved, That the number and denominations of the bills be as follows, viz.

4000	of	1-4 of a Dollar,	1000
4000		1-2 of a Dollar,	2000
400		1 do.	4000
4000		2 Dollars,	8000
4000		3 do.	12000
4000		4 do.	16000
4000		5 do.	20000
4000		8 do.	32000
8000		10 do.	50000

Resolved, That the form of the bills be as follows:

North-Carolina Currency.

No. Dollars.

This Bill entitles the bearer to receive Spanish milled Dollars, or the value thereof in Gold and Silver, according to the resolution of the Provincial Congress, held at Hillsborough the 21st day of August, 1775.

Resolved, That Mr. Samuel Johnston, Mr. Richard Caswell, Mr. Richard Cogdell, and Mr. Andrew Knox, be a committee to superintend the printing of the said bills, and to provide Paper, and to agree with an engraver to engrave or print the said bills, and to frame devices for the same; and that they be, and are hereby fully authorized to superintend the Press, to have the oversight and care of stamping or printing the bills of credit to be struck, and to number and sign the same; and after numbering and signing them, shall deliver the same to the Treasurers, or one of them, taking his or their Receipts for the bills so delivered; and that they be allowed the sum of 50, each for such services.

Resolved, That the said sum be sunk by a Tax of 2s. every Year on each taxable person in this Province, to commence for the Year 1777, and to continue for nine Years, unless the Money should be sooner sunk.

Resolved, That if any person shall refuse to receive the Public Bills of credit by this congress directed to be emitted, in payment of any debt or demand, or shall refuse to give them credit, or speak disrespectfully of the said bills, or shall offer a greater sum of the said bills in exchange than at the rate of 8s. for a dollar, such person shall be treated as an enemy to his Country, and it is recommended to the inhabitants of this Province to have no further connection or dealing with him.

Resolved, That where any person shall be accused of counterfeiting, altering, or erasing, any bill or bills of credit of this Province emitted by virtue of the resolves of this congress, or shall knowingly pass or utter, or with intent to pass or utter, shall offer the same to any per-

son or persons, both being thereof made, or sufficient, pregnant circumstances made appear, before any three members of the committee of the county where he shall be apprehended, or the nearest town, such person shall by the said Members of Committee, be committed to the Gaol of the district where the offence is supposed to be committed, there to remain until the next meeting of the committee of safety the said. And the said committee shall inquire into the truth of the accusation, and if it shall appear to two of them that there is sufficient proof to convict him, he shall be remanded to prison, there to remain until a convenient power shall be established for hearing and determining the matter, agreeable to the constitutional mode heretofore used in all capital cases; and if he shall be convicted on such future hearing, or shall stand mute, or challenge more than twenty of the petit Jury, he shall suffer death as a Felon, and the benefit of Clergy. But if the said committee shall be of opinion that there is not sufficient proof to convict him, he shall be discharged; and the persons who shall first commit him shall take necessary measures to compel the witnesses, as well for as against him, to appear at the meeting of the said committee of safety, and give testimony.

Resolved, That Mr. Samuel Johnston, Mr. Richard Caswell, Mr. Richard Cogdell, and Mr. Andrew Knox, shall, previously to their taking upon them the trust reposed in them by the above resolve, enter into bond with good and sufficient security, in the sum of 10,000, in proclamation money, each payable to the members of the provincial council, for the use of this province; with condition that he shall duly and faithfully execute and discharge the said trust reposed in him, according to the true intent and meaning of this congress: Which bond shall be lodged with the provincial council, and in case of a breach of the condition thereof, may be put in suit and recovered to the use of this province. And if any of the commissioners appointed as aforesaid should die, remove out of the province, or refuse to a, the surviving commissioners, or a majority of them, shall appoint one or another, in the room of him or them so dying, removing, or refusing; which commissioner or commissioners so appointed, shall enter into bond as aforesaid: And such commissioner shall, before his entering into office, take the following oath, to wit,

I A. B. do swear, upon the holy Evangelist of Amberg God, that I will, in consequence of the trust reposed in me by the Provincial Congress of this Province, faithfully execute the same; that I will not stamp, sign, or knowingly suffer to be stamped, signed, or emitted, more bills than such as have been described by the said congress; and as soon as such bills are emitted, that the plates used in stamping the same shall be destroyed.

Resolved, That the Treasurers be allowed, for receiving and paying away the said bills one per cent.

Foreign.

(The following letter is generally supposed to be from some one attached to the British Legation in Madrid. Its importance is, thereby, increased.)

LONDON, SEPT. 4.

Extract of a letter dated Madrid, Aug. 15.

The organization of Guernicas in the interior and the Florida question continue to be the chief subjects of conversation in the public circles of the Spanish capital; indeed the latter also affords a good share of amusement. The plots and under plots that have been interwoven in this diplomatic face would even excite laughter, if for a moment it were possible to forget the grave personages that acted a part in it. The bargain, originally intended by Spain to pay her debts and make the fortunes of a few favorites, has taken a turn, certainly in no way expected when the first negotiations commenced, and the king's counsellors begin to see that while their calculations were fond, their master, although feared by some as a despot (for I can assure you so many late banishments and imprisonments have had a wonderful effect at court) will be laughed at by the enlightened part of his own subject, owing to the caprice and weakness he has displayed in this affair, though by others he will be deemed a clumsy juggler. So many new circumstances have turned up since I last wrote you, that I cannot resist the temptation of giving my pen a little latitude, at a risque whether or not my letter may reach you.

It is now ascertained, that as soon as the Spanish cabinet had been made acquainted with the decided and angry language of the American secretary, Mr. Adams, and had taken an opportunity to deliberate on the reports of Mr. Onis, in which the king was told that the Americans insisted on the payment of their long outstanding debt, that possibly they would enforce it, and besides aid the South Americans, it was resolved to act on the advice given, and at once to make a transfer of the Floridas, whilst yet something could be had for them, and before they were seized by force, for Mr. Onis assured them that no further forbearance could be expected from the Washington government, as it was then constituted. No sooner was this point settled, than the king was informed that the transfer, besides paying a debt and stopping the mouth of the boisterous and clamorous Americans, might also be used as a medium through which he could display his royal munificence to some of his most faithful and deserving subjects. The hint was taken, and in consequence thereof three special grants were made, of which a short outline may now be unacceptable.

First Grant.—The King granted to the Duke D'Alagon (a great favorite, and here considered as one of those obsequious appendages necessary at the Court of a young Monarch fond of the fair sex) a tract of land with boundaries clearly defined, in East Florida, of which, (though no regular survey had been made, it was estimated at several millions of acres. The tract being one of the choicest of the whole Florida Territory, it was thought that ready and advantageous sales would be easily made.

Second.—The King graciously bestowed on Count Panon Rostro a tract nearly of the same dimensions as the above. This grant was at the time considered as the wisest, because the Count had rendered some essential services to the Crown; but that of the Duke was very much scoffed at by all those high minded Castilians, who were aware of the sacrifices by which it had been obtained.

Third.—The King also gave to Vargas, his private Treasurer, a grant "comprising all the lands in either of the Floridas belonging to the crown of Spain, and which had not been included in the two preceding grants." This broad and sweeping grant was received by the Grandees with surprise and jealous indignation, but Vargas and his friends endeavored to convince them that this royal donation was not so much intended to make the fortune of himself and his associates, as it was that it should operate as a grand political coup de main against the Executive of the United States, because in the event of the Floridas, the King was determined the Washington Government should have no soil in the Floridas to dispose of.

In the month of June, last year, Ferdinand had the satisfaction to learn that the American cabinet were apprised of these tokens of royal munificence, and by the diplomatic intercourse that immediately took place, he also discovered that matters were assuming a serious aspect. He therefore found himself constrained to issue a royal order, in which he laconically states, that "for imperious political reasons he revokes the cessions made to the three individuals above mentioned, and commands them immediately to give back their grants."

The count Panon Rostro and the treasurer Vargas promptly acquiesced in the decree, and returned to the king their grants; but the duke D'Alagon, who in Madrid is considered as a cunning old fox, ventured to remonstrate with his lord and master, and stated, that as an agent had been sent to America for the purpose of selling these lands, and as bona fide sales had actually been effected of part thereof, it was not possible to revoke them without a breach of good faith, that might affect the national character; adding, however, that he would suspend further sales.

Ferdinand, who is not in the habit of allowing any of his courtiers, even those who have most witnessed his foibles, to disobey him with impunity, intimated to the duke, that if he did not conform to the literal tenor of the royal decree, he might calculate on incurring his utmost displeasure.

Thus, for the present, has terminated the most curious affair that ever disgraced the Spanish court. A splendid fortune would have been made by the above named individuals and their friends, if the grants in question had not been overturned by the royal decree; but the objects of the king's intended munificence are now viewed with contempt by all parties. Some other strange transactions in this mysterious affair, of which we are yet to see the denouement, shall form the subject of another communication.

London, September 7.

We understand that letters are in town from Cadiz, which give advice that the British transports, chartered for the purpose of joining the grand expedition, have all been discharged. Can this be owing to their being no longer wanted, or is it because British seamen cannot now be trusted in the projected undertaking? Time will shew. But if we mistake not, the grand expedition will be broken up piecemeal, in the same manner in which it has been formed, and add a considerable sum to the national debt. The hire of 36 large ships, which for nearly 8 months have been doing little else than bask in the sun in the harbour of Cadiz constitutes not small item in the general expenditure.

Extract from a letter dated Madrid, August 22

"I perform my promise by communicating to you the denouement of an affair to which I have already called your attention more than once.—The treaty between Spain and the United States for the cession and transfer of East and West Florida is not ratified. The King gave in his final determination this day, and it is a flat negative. My calculations, therefore, have not been erroneous. All the political circles here are occupied in speculations on the results that will follow this determination of Ferdinand. It is not known what course the United States' minister intends to adopt, but he will of course follow the instructions of his government, who have had sufficient time and ample grounds to prepare for this alternative, even by what must have reached America before the arrival of the Hornet from Cadiz. He will not, therefore be puzzled as if the event was unexpected. It is said here, that a vessel of war from the United States is daily expected either at Lisbon or Cadiz, and it is presumed she is coming for the express purpose of conveying Mr. Forsyth home.

"As I have just said, many speculations are afloat. The advocates for the grand expedition at Cadiz now begin to look blue, and you may depend upon it Ferdinand will never venture his grand all at sea, till he knows what line of policy the Washington Cabinet will adopt. It is confidently said, that the 5000 troops who lately left Cadiz have not gone to Havana, but to Florida; if so, it would seem that his Catholic Majesty is resolved to maintain with the sword every inch of Spanish America!

Madrid, August 23.

"The King has definitively refused to ratify the Treaty with the United States for the cession of the Floridas, the period fixed for the exchange of the ratifications expired yesterday. Our Cabinet has replied to the American Minister, that his Majesty was under the necessity of obtaining further information relative to various articles of the Treaty, and that for this purpose his Majesty would choose a person to proceed to Washington to demand it. This extraordinary termination of this matter has caused much surprise in Madrid. Don Louis De Onis is still in Madrid without being either in favor or disgrace."

Paris, August 27. Professor Meinicke has recently made a very important discovery, he has found the means of lighting, by electricity, an artificial gas, in glass tubes, which diffuses a light without burning. The electric sparks spread and multiply to an infinite number. With one of the electrical machines a whole city can easily be lighted, and with very trifling expence.

Bordeaux, September 3.

The month, which has just commenced, has considerably ameliorated our commercial situation: Business is much more lively than it was the preceding month. The happy effects of the establishment of a bank at Bordeaux are beginning to be felt.

London, August 28.

The Exchange continues in the greatest agitation. Two new bankruptcies were declared yesterday before the doors closed. The number of bankruptcies and suspensions of payment, are said to amount to forty. The same distress prevails in the funds, hardly any business is doing.

ENTRY OF HUNT INTO MANCHESTER.

Manchester, August 30.

Hunt has returned (having been bailed). Yesterday he dined at Preston's and slept at Bolton's at the Swan. An immense crowd filled the streets in the neighborhood, whom he addressed. This morning, about ten o'clock, he left Bolton's, and as the "Observer" had announced that he would make his entry about 2 o'clock, the population were in advance to meet him for more than 6 miles—a heavy rain which fell did not disperse the crowd—Chapman on horseback led the march—Hunt in the Bolton coach, in which Knight was also—2 or 300 persons disputed the honor of performing the office of horses—Sir C. Wolsey and Johnson followed in a second carriage, and Hunt's servant brought up the rear in another. In passing the Exchange, Hunt took off his hat, and raised a shout of joy. He did not stop in town, but went to Smedley, Johnson's country house, where he now is with his jumento. Notwithstanding the bad weather, 2 or 3000 persons accompanied him as far as there.

Boulogne, August 31.

The expedition of 12 sail of the line now fitting out at Plymouth for some foreign destination, has given rise to various speculations as to its ostensible object. A letter which was received this morning from one of our correspondents in London, well acquainted with what passes there, states that it is rumored in the best circles that this fleet is destined for Havana, that the government declares that whether Ferdinand ratified the Treaty for the cession of the Floridas, or not, to the United States, the British are determined to hold that important post provisionally as a security for the West India possessions; that cautious policy alone has delayed the sailing of the armament—that as soon as despatches were received from the British Ambassador at the Court of Madrid, Lord Henry Wellesly, the fleet would set sail. Despatches from his Lordship were momentarily expected.

From the London Star of Sept. 7.

"Policies were this morning opened on the Royal Exchange to receive one hundred pounds on paying twenty pounds, if war is declared between Spain and the United States, on or before this day two months.

DOMESTIC.

New-Orleans, Sept. 15.

The United States revenue cutter Louisiana, captain J. Loomis, and the Alabama, also a revenue cutter, which were lately built in New-York, arrived at Bayou St. John, yesterday, having in company the Spanish schooner Philomena, which they recaptured from a pirate on the 29th ult. off the Dry Tortugas. The pirate is also brought in. On that day they fell in with an American schooner bound from this port, on board of which the pirate had placed a number of Spanish gentlemen and ladies, who had been passengers in the Philomena. From their information, captain Loomis supposed that the pirate could not be very distant, and determined to look out for her. Eight hours afterwards, accordingly, he espied two sail, one of which stood for him, and on being required by the captain of the Alabama to send her boat on board, fired a volley of small arms: she was soon silenced however, and taken possession of. She proved to be a schooner called the Brave, fitted out at New-Orleans, carrying two guns and twenty-four men, and commanded by a man who calls himself Le Fage. Her prize the Philomena, was about a mile astern during the action, but was soon overhauled and re-captured. In the slight contest, which preceded the capture of the Brave, the Alabama had four of her men wounded, two of them, including the first lieutenant, dangerously—the pirate lost six men killed. The remainder of her crew, to the number of 18, were safely lodged in prison last evening. The Brave had on board a number of Spanish prisoners, who are thus happily relieved from a captivity, which most probably would have terminated, if they had not fallen in with the revenue cutter, by their being compelled to walk the plank. The pirate had a printed commission, the date of which was blank, signed Humbert, Governor of Texas.

A passenger in the Emma, who conversed with Captain Loomis, states, that at the time the above pirate was captured, she had not been in possession of her Spanish prize long enough to commit the outrages upon the passengers which were threatened, but had stripped the of nearly all their clothes. The pirate approached with sweeps within pistol shot of the cutter before she fired. Only three men in the cutter were wounded, one of them, it was said, dangerously. The vessel had been recently cleared out at New-Orleans, for Pensacola. We learn by the above passenger, that the piratical establishment at Barataria, whence the recent expeditions into the Mississippi were made, had been surprised by the United States cruisers, and entirely broken up.