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## Congress.

### USE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

TUESDAY, DEC. 5.

#### CONCLUSION OF MR. QUINCY'S SPEECH

On the 2d point, viz. as the measure was a mean of terminating the war—Mr. Quincy said, that this was grounded on the expectation that it would operate on Great Britain by fear. As to the feasibility of the conquest, he would say nothing, further than that he admitted we had the means—But if Great Britain saw that it was a threat we meant to execute, and was aware that the conquest of Canada could be effected—just in proportion as she was sure of that—in that proportion was there the less chance of her coming to an accommodation. Young politicians in that house, with the pin-neathers yet unshed, and the shell still sticking upon them—perfectly unflinched, though they had cackled on the floor of congress, who form such extravagant and ignorant opinions of a very proud nation; a nation the last in the world to be intimidated, should be informed that the fact, which above all others the history of England most incontrovertibly established, is, that she always sacrifices the present to the future—that she always meets danger half way; and that she yields nothing to menaces. This was the basis of her power and her greatness. This, how little we ever know upon the floor of congress, was well known by our cabinet, and well made use of to their purposes; on that ground the present measure, like the attack on Canada, was, not to make peace, but to ensure war. Mr. Quincy said meant to judge truly, but it was his privilege, and his duty, as a public man, to expose the bad principles of the cabinet—In this case the principle and the practice was that there was no attempt to negotiate which was not preceded by some subtlety to prevent its success—and looking at their reasons it was this? The way that party threw out their opponents and got into power, was by associating them with political prejudices in favor of Great Britain. In circulating those prejudices lay the whole strength of the administration: For this reason they never let any topic connected with that subject be fairly weighed. Bringing antipathies against Britain to bear on opposition—circulating those antipathies and keeping them alive, being the whole object of their policy—for this the treaty of 1804 was rejected; for this the treaty of 1807 was rejected; for this the embargo was laid; and for this the treasury was squeezed of 50,000 dollars to Henry, in order to aid the executive at the eve of an election, and to secure his own election to the chief magistracy by circulating that infamous calumny. These British antipathies were to the president and his friends what Peter's loaf in the Tale of the Tub, was to him, beef, mutton, veal, pudding, tarts, and custards.

From the rejection of the treaty of 1804 the American cabinet contrived previous to every negotiation to adopt some plan to prevent its success. It recommended the non-intercourse merely to preclude negotiation; the consequence was, that Great Britain would not proceed till it was suspended, a treaty then ensued, and that treaty was rejected—then they had recourse to the embargo—then came the arrangement with Erskine, in order to gain popularity for the new president, without ever asking the young man whether he had credentials for the purpose. But there was a much worse and provoking outrage practised to enflame Great Britain, an insult personally to the British king; an insult such as gentlemen do not bear from each other—no less than an assertion that the British monarch did not know what was his own honor so well as Mr. Madison truly—and this Mr. Smith, the Secretary of State, honestly avowed afterwards was put in by Mr. Madison himself, and put in with the sole view to keep irritation alive.

If there was any thing to which man could be solemnly pledged, the president was pledged, both as a magistrate and a gentleman; that the Berlin and Milan Decrees were repealed on the 1st Nov. 1806—on that assertion of his, the renewed hostility to Great Britain was founded; and yet, behold! when that hostility was commenced, Napoleon declared that the conditions he stipulated being complied with by that hostility, then for the first time, and not till then, viz. in March, 1811, the Berlin and Milan decrees were repealed. Mr. Madison said in his message, that in the repeal there was something very objectionable. It was time for him to say and to think so, when the French Emperor therein gave him the lie direct. As soon as the American cabinet found that there was a mistake, they ought to have sent Great Britain half way in an accommodation. If they had a real wish for peace, they would have done so, and agreed to a cessation of hostilities, instead of which, when the Governor of Canada proposed an armistice, he

sent the whole force of the army against that country, and did every thing to involve the country in ruin, havoc and desolation.—This disclosed a disposition out of the ordinary course of inhumanity, and if it were not too lamentable to be treated with levity, might be compared to the disposition ascribed to the giant in the children's old play—

*Fee, faw, fum,  
I smell the blood of a British man,  
Be he alive, or be he dead,  
I will have some.*

Unanimity had been spoken of—If by unanimity was meant concert in the conquest of Canada, he for one would never unite—it would be to betray to his country. If one dollar was the offering, he would have upon him the guilt of it. But if government would limit the army, stop this bill and its threats they should have his support. He knew there were those who were ready to open upon him with the old stale cry of British connection. It was not egotism to speak of what belonged to his country.—It would ill become a man whose family had been two centuries settled in the State, and whose interest, connections and affections were exclusively American, to shrink from his duty for the yelpings of those bloodhound mongrels who were kept in pay to hunt down all those who opposed the court; a pack of mangy hounds of recent importations—their backs still sore with the stripes of European castigation, and their necks marked with the check collar—“No,” (exclaimed Mr. Q.) may heaven send all with me as I am faithful to my country, and may a just judgment fall on me if I fail to bring to the public tribunal those who are bringing that country to ruin.” Of the men who compose the American cabinet, Mr. Q. said he knew but little, and that little did not make him ambitious to know more—but duty obliged him to look into the construction of it—Doing so he found that the destinies of the country had for twelve years been exclusively decided by three individuals—two Virginians and one foreigner. Out of 28 years of our government's existence, Virginians had for 24 been Presidents—to perpetuate that power in the state was the object; James the 1st was a long time ago as secure of being appointed for a second four years as the prince regent of England to the throne of his father; and by a similar plan of intrigue the succession is already fixed on for James the second.

With his election the bill before the house was connected. Mr. Q. would show that the bill was not what it pretended to be, but something else. There was a great army to be raised by a great loan. It was natural then to inquire by whom that army was to be commanded? The answer distinctly was, “by the man who was destined for the next Presidency.” If personal considerations governed him, Mr. Q. said, this was not the time to develop his machinations; but it was his duty to show how we were moving on by degrees to standing army despotism. From documents he read he showed that the firm laid plan of the cabinet of THREE was, to place one of themselves in the command of the army. And he appealed to every honest man in the house, whether they could match from history the pace of our state-managers or whether such a rapid progress of ambition had ever been developed, as in this free republic, a cabinet of only three men, raising an army of 55,000 men, and placing one of themselves at the head of it.

#### MR. PEARSON'S SPEECH,

On the bill for raising an additional force of twenty thousand men, to be enlisted for one year.

MR. PEARSON, (of N. C.) said—

Not infrequently it happens, Mr. Speaker, both in private and political life, that men of the clearest perceptions and most correct motives, experience much difficulty and embarrassment in determining on the course best to be pursued—on the application of means best calculated to produce a given object. The object most devoutly wished for by myself, and no doubt equally desired by every honest and honorable man in this community, is, that my country should once more be restored to the enjoyment of peace. Under the pressure of existing circumstances—involved in a war with a powerful nation—a war now prosecuted for a doubtful, or at least, strongly controverted question of national right—a war the prosecution of which, so far as relates to our military operations, has every where, and on all occasions, been attended with disgrace, defeat or disaster—Under such circumstances, I confess, sir, I am not free from embarrassment in determining on the course demanded by genuine patriotism, and best calculated to restore the blessings of peace to the country. I rejoiced to hear the honorable chairman of the military committee, (Mr. D. R. Williams,) declare the other day, that his object was also peace. It must be a source of gratification to the country, to learn that some of the strongest advocates for war, begin now to think and talk of peace. The honorable gentleman, however, urges the passage of the bill under consideration, (which authorizes the enlistment of 20,000 additional regular troops for one

year, and provides for the appointment of, proportionably, an unusual number of officers with all the accompanying paraphernalia of an army), as the means best calculated to produce the end in view. Did I believe, sir, that the passage of this bill, or (what is more difficult and unlikely to happen) the actual enlistment of the proposed additional force would secure to us our object, I would not only consent to give this force, but ten times the number—if it were by force alone to be obtained; but when I reflect on the *special and sole cause* for which avowedly the war is now prosecuted; when I consider the relative strength, situation and disposable force by sea and land of the two nations—and especially when my recollection is assailed (for we cannot, nor ought we to close our senses against such damning facts) with the heretofore scanty enlistment—the confusion and insubordination which has pervaded many parts of your army—the extraordinary expense already incurred, and the uniform disaster which has marked all your military operations—I cannot bring my mind to the belief, that the force now proposed can produce any desirable effect.

Mr. Speaker, as much as I was opposed to the declaration of war—and as much as subsequent events have convinced me of the correctness of the vote I gave on that momentous question—it is not my purpose on this occasion to question the policy of that unfortunate act—My mind is bent on *peace*—to that object my efforts are directed. The impression is strongly fixed on my understanding, that this war can be terminated with honor and advantage to this nation, without the further effusion of blood. If so surely no Christian will deny, but justice, humanity and sound policy demands, that nothing should remain *undone*, on our part, to stop this career of carnage and bloodshed. I have said, sir, that it is my impression, that this war can be terminated with honor and advantage to this nation, without a further appeal to arms. In stating this opinion, I do not mean to be understood as identifying the *honor* of the nation with the honor of those by whom the war was declared; or, in other words, I do not admit, that the national honor rests solely in the hands of those who may happen to be in the administration, or who may happen to constitute a majority in congress. No, sir, this is an elective government—the power and the ultimate responsibility rest with the people; they cannot be dishonored unless they pertinaciously approve of unwise or wicked measures, and continue to support the authors of such measures.—It is therefore, not with me a primary consideration in the suggestions I am about to make, how far the honor or reputation, for political wisdom, of any individuals may be affected by the adoption of the plan for *peace*, which has occurred to my mind. I do not know that any honorable gentleman will be affected by it, should it be adopted. I hope he will not—to me it is perfectly indifferent who are in power, so that the affairs of the nation are well conducted.

Mr. Speaker—Whatever may have been the original causes for the declaration of this war we are now taught to believe that the question in contest is reduced to a *single point*. The British orders in council were repealed on the 21st of June, three days after our declaration of war; and of course, without a knowledge of that event. The blockade of May, 1806, had long ceased to exist. The sole avowed cause, therefore, remaining, and for which the war is now carried on, is the practice of impressment from on board our merchant vessels. This subject has for many years engaged the attention of both nations—it has been a fruitful theme of execration and declamation for almost every editor and orator of the age. Great as our cause of complaint may have been, (and I am not disposed to palliate it) it must be admitted by all who understand the nature and true bearing of the question, that it has been subjected to much exaggeration. Permit me, sir, here to remark, that notwithstanding the importance, the difficulty and delicacy which have justly been attributed to this subject, and the unwillingness at all times manifested on the part of the British government to abandon or derogate from the abstract right of impressing her own seamen from on board neutral merchant vessels, it is very far from being certain, that she has not been willing to enter into such arrangement with this government, as would place the question of impressment on a basis both safe and honorable to this nation. By a reference to the correspondence of Messrs. Monroe and Pinkney with the British commissioners, which preceded the treaty concluded by those gentlemen in the year 1806, but which was unfortunately rejected by the then president, it is evident, that the interest of impressment was, in the opinion of those gentlemen, placed on a footing well calculated to secure our own seamen from the abuse against which we had complained, and against which it was our duty to protect them.

This opinion was not only expressed in forcible and decisive language at the time of entering into the arrangement, but repeated by Mr. Monroe more than a year after, in a formal letter to the secretary of state. The language of that gentleman, now your secretary of state, is peculiarly emphatic, and must be within the recollection of every gentleman in this house—without troubling the house with the reading of the documents referred to, it is sufficient for me to state, that your present secretary of state, did, in a letter addressed to Mr. Madison, dated February 28th, 1808, declare, “that he always believed and did still believe, that the ground on which the interest of impressment was placed by the paper of the British

commissioners of 8th November, 1806, and the explanations which accompanied it, was both honorable and advantageous to the United States.”

Thus, sir, as we have conclusive evidence of disposition on the part of the British government at one period at least, to advance a considerable length towards an adjustment of this long contested question, and as we have no evidence that different principles and claims are now asserted, from those then advanced I think it fair to conclude, that it will in our power to put an end to this controversy with safety to our seamen and advantage to the nation. Instead, then, of passing this bill and spending the blood and treasure of our countrymen in the prosecution of this war I conceive it our duty to make an effort for the sanction of our just rights and the restoration of peace, without a further appeal to force. It is my decided opinion, that such an effort, if fairly and liberally made by this house, and the executive branch of the government, would not fail in producing the desired effect. The peculiar nature of the question which now constitutes the sole object for continuing the war—the intimation given by the executive in the correspondence with the British government since the declaration of war, together with the opinions stated by Mr. Monroe and Pinkney in the letter to the secretary of state of Jan. 30, 1807, all tend to confirm me in the belief, that it is the duty of congress to pass a law, which would not only check desertions from the British service, by excluding persons of that description from employ in our service, but also deprive the British government of the apology allowed for impressing American seamen by excluding British subjects from the commercial and public service of the United States. Having alluded to the letter of Monroe and Pinkney of the 3d January 1807, I will take the liberty of reading from it a short extract. After stating the opinion they had formally expressed, that “although the British government did not feel itself at liberty to relinquish, formally, by treaty, its claim to search our merchant vessels for British seamen, its practice would, nevertheless, be essentially, if not completely abandoned, they observe, “That opinion has been since confirmed by frequent conferences on the subject with the British commissioners, who have repeatedly assured us that in their judgment, we were made as secure against the exercise of their pretension by the policy which their government had adopted, in regard to that very delicate and important question, as we could have been made by treaty.”

“It is proper to observe, however, that the good effect of this disposition and its continuance, may depend, in a great measure, on the means which may be taken hereafter by the congress to check desertions from the British service. If the treaty is ratified, and a perfect good understanding is produced by it between the two countries, it will be easy for their governments by friendly communications to state to each other what they respectively desire, and in that mode to arrange the business as satisfactorily as it could be done by treaty.”

Thus, sir, had the treaty of 1806 been ratified and a good understanding been produced between the two countries—congress were warned, even in that event, that it was their duty to lend their aid in rendering effectual and perpetual any arrangement which might be made on the subject of impressment—As to the late communications from the executive department, made to the British government since the declaration of war, it is not my intention, at this time, to enter into a particular examination of the merit or demerit: I will barely remark that to me they present a novelty in the history of war and diplomacy, propositions allged to be of a pacific nature made in *six days* after the declaration of war! Such a procedure, much as I desire peace and much as I was opposed to the war, is to my mind, to say the least, extremely extraordinary and its policy incomprehensible. It is the more so from the circumstance of a British minister being on the spot at the moment of declaring the war, and keeping up a continued correspondence with the secretary of state to the last moment of the existence of peace. Under such circumstances I should conceive each nation ought to have known the *ultimatum* of the other, and not waited for the *form* of a declaration of war to resume the negotiation and give a new shape to their propositions. I confess that I am not surprised at the result of this *war negotiation*; every thing was demanded to be yielded by the enemy, for which the war was declared, even a preliminary in the first instance to an armistice, and in the second instance as preliminary to a negotiation. The equivalent offered on our part was of a nature which it was not within the province of the executive to confirm; and of course depended on what congress might, or might not, do on the subject. In addition to this, our agent in London, through whom those propositions were made, did not possess regular and competent powers, and was considered by the British government as incompetent to act with them on such a subject, on equal terms of obligation and responsibility. Whatever, therefore, may be my opinion in relation to these last propositions, and however ill calculated they may have been to produce any desirable result, I am far from considering them unworthy the particular attention of this house. I allude particularly to the equivalent proposed, as an inducement for the discontinuance of the practice of impressment. Here for the *first time* in the whole history of the long protracted discussions on this subject, it is intimated that something effectual will be done on our part to prevent the cause of the abuse of which we complain, for *præsent* is given, in the event of obtaining the conces-