

The impressive language of his honorable friend from N. Jersey, (Mr. Bloomfield) who had himself been a conspicuous actor in the scenes of the revolution, and who had introduced and advocated the bill of 1818; but, in giving his santo to that of benevolence, Mr. B. had no idea that it would produce so vast a consumption of the public resources. According to the report of the committee of 1818, it was expected that the maximum of the pensions to be allowed, would be about 200,000 dollars; but what was the fact? It was now found that they exceeded that amount by about fifteen times. Mr. B. was then, and was yet, willing to perform towards the soldiers of the revolution an act of benevolence, but not at a cost which the nation was unprepared to pay.

As to the proposed repeal being inconsistent with the honor of the nation, or, as was said, inconsistent with a vested right, Mr. B. observed, he was not among those who would do any thing that was inconsistent with either, and yet he was prepared to vote for a very considerable modification of the law. He argued that the pensions granted could not be deemed a vested right—that, the act was one of gratuitous bounty—not of justice; because, had it been demanded by justice, it could have known no distinction; that, being an act of charity, it continued at the option of the government; and this opinion Mr. B. illustrated by various arguments. In voting for this modification, he did no violence to the benevolence which dictated the first act, because a man was not bound to extend charity to the injury of his own family. To continue the act unmodified would be injurious and unjust to a large portion of the people of this nation, as it would be necessary to raise the amount required by it, by laying taxes, directly or indirectly; and he wished that the state of the treasury might not be such as to coerce the house into the imposition of direct taxes. Let the committee, Mr. B. said, cast a look over the country, and see if there were not thousands and tens of thousands on whom the tax would fall, who were as poor, and infinitely poorer, than thousands of those pensioners for whom the tax would be laid, &c.

Mr. B. again adverted to the details of his amendment. He had singled out those who had served three years and upwards, because it was they who bore the heat and brunt of the war—of the campaigns of '77, '78, and '79—in the fields of Monmouth, of Princeton, of Bennington, of Brandywine, &c. A great part of the nine and twelve months' men, were substitutes, and in addition to their pay from their country, received pay as substitutes—serving successive tours as such. Mr. B. thought all who continued to receive pensions, ought to be put on an equal footing; the sum allowed, he would make sufficient to provide for them food and clothing—further than this, it was utterly impossible for the government to go. In fixing the allowance, the comfortable subsistence of the individuals was all that could be provided for—he could not think of taking their families into view, or entering into considerations of their affluence, &c. To provide relief with such views, or to that extent, would be beyond the ability of the nation to pay without resorting to the means before alluded to—of laying taxes on the people, &c. In support of the opinions which he advanced in the course of his remarks, Mr. B. entered into a number of arguments and illustrations which, in this brief notice, cannot be presented.

Mr. Culpeper was willing to strike out the first section of the bill, not however to accept the substitute offered by Mr. Barbour, but to agree to the best provisions to guard against imposition. He wished the act, in other respects, to stand as it was—he would not strike off one cent of what these men were justly entitled to by the existing act. Mr. C. said, he knew what it was to be a soldier, himself, and to serve, when a morsel of bread was a luxury. Many, however, took the benefit of this act who were not entitled to it, and he would do every thing to guard against that abuse, but further he would not go. He was against reducing the officer with the level of the soldier. Their habits were different, Mr. C. said, and their talents, and their wants—the officers were of more value to the country, and it would be a bad example, and injurious hereafter to the interest of the nation to put them on the same footing. He thought the distinction made in the act was a good one, and he would not consent to change it.

Mr. Anderson, of Kentucky, avowed himself decidedly opposed to the repeal of the law, and consequently against Mr. Barbour's amendment, but he would support every position tending to give the act a fair and strict construction; and he would therefore take those parts of Mr. B.'s amendments which went to that object. Mr. A. said he was afraid he might have been wrong in voting for the act of 1818, but he was sure he should be right in voting against its repeal. The bounty had been freely offered and continued two years, and, whether right or wrong, originally, he would not withdraw it. He was also opposed to the levelling principle. That feature he had been in favour of when the act was under consideration; but congress then determined against it—

the distinction between officers and privates had existed two years, and he was averse now to disturbing it. Mr. A. said, the bounty had been voluntarily offered by congress—the soldiers of the revolution had been invited to come forward and receive this boon, at the hands of a grateful country—and would it be generous or becoming, because it was found to take more money than was expected, now to revoke the bounty? Mr. A. thought not, and spoke at some length in support of his opinions. He concluded by saying that if the law was defective, or not sufficiently guarded, he would give it additional safe-guards; but he would not repeal it, or so modify it as to reduce the allowance of an officer from 240 dollars to 96 dollars.

The committee then rose, obtained leave to sit again, and

The house adjourned.

Monday, March 20.

A bill was reported from the committee of naval affairs, the object of which is so to amend the act for the government of the navy, as to authorize an extension of the present term of enlistment of seamen.

Mr. Pindall reported a bill, the object of which is to amend the acts authorizing the publication of the laws of the United States, so as to confine the publication of them in 25 newspapers in the states and one in this District, and to abolish the compensation now allowed by law for that service.

These bills were twice read and committed.

Mr. Storrs, from the committee on roads and canals, reported the following bill:

*Be it enacted, &c.* That the president of the United States be and he is hereby authorized to cause to be erected on the national road, leading from Cumberland, in state of Maryland, to the river Ohio, so many toll-houses, gates, and turnpikes, as in his opinion, will be necessary and sufficient to collect the duties and tolls hereinafter mentioned, from all persons travelling on the same, to be erected at such places as he shall determine: *Provided*, That the number of such gates and turnpikes shall not exceed twelve, nor be less than six; and such gates and turnpikes shall be erected at a distance not less than ten miles from each other.

Sec. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That as soon as the said gates and turnpikes shall be erected, the president of the United States is hereby authorized to appoint toll-gatherers to collect and receive of and from every person or persons using the said road, the tolls and duties hereinafter mentioned, at each of the said gates, that is to say: for each score of sheep or swine, six cents; for each score of cattle, twelve cents; for every chariot, coach, coachee, or phæton, twenty-five cents; for every stage, wagon, or other four-wheeled carriage for the conveyance of passengers, drawn by four horses, twelve cents; for every cart, sleigh, or sled, drawn by two oxen or horses, six cents; and for every additional horse or ox, two cents; for every wagon drawn by two horses, eight cents; and for every additional horse, four cents; for each person and horse, six cents; for each chaise, sulky, or one-horse wagon, six cents; and it shall be lawful for any of the toll-gatherers to stop any person or persons riding, leading, or driving any horses, cattle, sheep, swine, sulky, phæton, coach, coachee, chariot, chaise, cart, wagon, sleigh, or other carriage of burden or pleasure, from passing through the gates or turnpikes, until he or they shall have respectively paid the toll above specified: *Provided*, That nothing in this act shall be construed so as to authorize any tolls to be received or collected for any person passing to or from public worship, or to or from his common business on his farm, or to or from a funeral, or to or from a mill: *And provided, further*, That no toll shall be received or collected for the passage of any wagon or carriage laden with the property of the United States, or any cannon or military stores belonging to the United States, or any of the states composing this Union, or any person or persons on duty in the military service of the United States, or the militia of any of the states.

Sec. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That if any of the toll gatherers shall unreasonably delay or hinder any passenger or traveller at any of the gates, or shall demand or receive more toll than is by this act established, he shall, for each and every such offence, forfeit and pay to the party so aggrieved the sum of ten dollars.

Sec. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That if any person who shall use the said road, shall, with a view to evade the payment of the tolls required by this act, leave the said road, and go round the said gates, every such person shall, for every such offence, forfeit and pay to and for the use of the United States, the sum of twelve dollars.

Sec. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That the toll gatherers on the said road shall respectively receive compensation for their services, at the rate of twelve per cent. on the amount of tolls by them respectively received: *Provided*, That the annual compensation of any toll gatherer shall never exceed the sum of three hundred and fifty dollars; nor shall the same be less in any one year than one hundred and twenty dollars; and,

in case of any deficiency in the amount collected by any toll gatherer below the sum of one hundred and twenty dollars, the residue shall be paid out of the tolls collected at the other gates on said road.

Sec. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That the amount of tolls collected on said road shall be paid into the treasury of the United States semi-annually, by the toll gatherers on said road, and a separate account kept thereof; and the said monies, after deducting therefrom the expenses and charges of collecting the same, shall be applied, under the direction of the president of the United States, to the repairs and preservation of said road, in such manner and under such regulations, as he may prescribe, and to no other purpose whatever.

This bill having been read, and its second reading being in due course proposed—

Mr. Barbour moved to reject the bill.

This motion gave rise to a short debate, in the course of which it was supported by Mr. Barbour and Mr. Randolph, and opposed by Mr. Hardin, Mr. Livermore, and Ballard Smith.

Our reporter did not reach the house in time to hear the whole of the debate, and to report a part of it would not be very fair.

In general, the motion to reject the bill was supported on the ground that the question which it involved had been as much discussed as any ever presented to the view of the legislature; that the discussions and solemn decisions of this house had gone forth to the world; that the mind of every member was made up on it, and therefore there was no need of delay for reflection—and that the principle of the bill was, in the opinion of the advocates of its rejection, so obnoxious that it ought not to be entertained by the house for a moment.

The motion to reject was opposed on the ground that the question was one of much importance, and ought not to be hastily disposed of; that the preservation of a national work, which has already cost so much money, was an object of importance, if within the constitutional power of congress; that, in fact, the question involved in the bill had never yet been decided by congress; that, being but this day presented, it would be unreasonable to call upon the house to say it was so odious they would not look at it, &c.

The question on the motion to reject the bill was then put in this form—“*Shall this bill be rejected?*” on which the votes were—yeas 47, nays 111.

So the house refused to reject the bill; and it was twice read and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

The engrossed bill appropriating money for continuing the centre building of the capitol was read a third time, passed, without debate or division, and sent to the senate.

The remainder of the day was occupied in debating the bill for amending the pension law, and the proposition of Mr. Barbour to substitute for it a different bill. Messrs. Reid, Hill, Fuller, Trimble, Barbour, Livermore, and Bloomfield, engaged in the bill; among whom Mr. Hill, Mr. Fuller, and Mr. Livermore, earnestly opposed any invasion of the principle of the pension law. The bill was read a third time, passed, without debate or division, and sent to the senate.

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Before coming to any decision on the subject, the committee rose and reported progress—and

The house adjourned.

Tuesday, March 21.

Mr. Storrs, from the committee on roads and canals, to whom the subject was referred, made a report, of which the following is the resolution recommended by the committee for the adoption of the house:

*Resolved*, That the committee on roads and canals be discharged from the further consideration of the communication to this house from the secretary of the department of the navy, on the 18th day of January last, and the petition of the inhabitants of the borough of Erie, in the state of Pennsylvania, relative to the improvement of the harbour of Erie.

The house concurred in the report.

A like report was made and concurred in, with respect to several petitions praying the aid of congress in the construction and improvement of certain roads.

Mr. Southard, from the committee to whom had been referred the senate's bill “for the better regulation of the trade with the Indian tribes,” reported the same without amendment, and it was referred to a committee of the whole.

REVOLUTIONARY PENSIONS.

The house then again resolved itself into a committee of the whole, Mr. Beecher in the chair, on the bill to amend the revolutionary pension law.

Various amendments were offered, proposing all sorts of modifications of the present law; all which were successively rejected.

Until at length a motion was made to strike out the whole of the bill except the enacting clause, so as to leave a blank to be filled with any thing the house should choose.

This motion was agreed to (at about

the usual hour of adjournment) by a vote of 75 to 41.

The committee then rose, reported progress, and the chairman asked the usual leave to sit again.

Before it was granted, however, a motion was made to adjourn, and was carried.

Wednesday, March 22.

Mr. Baldwin, from the committee on manufactures, reported “a bill to regulate the duties on imports, and for other purposes.”

The bill was twice read and committed.

The speaker laid before the house a letter from the secretary of the treasury, transmitting the annual statement of imports into the United States, (for the year 1818.)

Mr. Slocumb moved that the house proceed to the consideration of his motion proposing to fix the day of adjournment of the present session; which motion was decided in the negative.

REVOLUTIONARY PENSION LAW.

The house having proceeded to the order of the day, on the bill to amend the revolutionary pension law,

Mr. Whitman moved to discharge the committee of the whole from the further consideration of the bill, and to postpone the same indefinitely.

This motion caused considerable debate.

A division of the question being called for, the question was taken on discharging the committee, and decided in the negative.

The house then again resolved itself into a committee of the whole, Mr. Beecher in the chair, on the bill.

Various amendments were proposed and debated, some of which were agreed to, and others not. The result was that the bill was brought to the shape which it wears, as follows:

That the secretary of the war department be, and he is hereby authorized and directed to cause examinations to be made into the circumstances of such persons as have been, or shall be, placed on the pension list of the United States, by virtue of the act, entitled “an act to provide for certain persons engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the revolutionary war,” passed on the 18th day of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen, and if it shall satisfactorily appear to the war department, that any of the said persons are not proper subjects of the said law, it shall be the duty of the secretary of the war department, to cause the names of such persons to be stricken from the said list; and the pension allowed to such persons, shall thenceforth cease and determine: and no person who has an income equal to one hundred dollars per annum, or an estate of the value of two hundred dollars, shall be considered in such reduced circumstances as to entitle him to a pension under the said recited act.

The question on the motion to reject the bill was then put in this form—“*Shall this bill be rejected?*” on which the votes were—yeas 47, nays 111.

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The engrossed bill appropriating money for continuing the centre building of the capitol was read a third time, passed, without debate or division, and sent to the senate.

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The assassin was interrogated, in the presence of M. de Cazes, and declared boldly that he had meditated the murder ever since 1814, and that he had quitted Metz for Calais in the intention of assassinating the king on his *rentree*, but that he arrived too late; that he had at length determined on the extermination of the duke de Berri, as the youngest of the family, knowing that nature would soon dispense him from the necessity of abridging the days of the king. This monster was employed in the saddlery of the king, and it appears was one of those who went and returned with Bonaparte from Elba.

The duke de Berri died at six o'clock in the arms of his majesty.

London, Feb. 18.

We have received this morning the Paris papers of Tuesday. They are, of course, painfully interesting, for they communicate a variety of facts connected with the assassination of his royal highness the duke de Berri. Among the most important of these is the undeniable one, that the atrocious crime was committed from political motives. This alarming truth was distinctly admitted, not only by the members of the two chambers, who met to address his majesty on this mournful occasion, but it is recognized by the king himself, in the concluding sentence of his answer to the address of the deputies. “The chamber cannot doubt,” said his majesty, “that, feeling as a man, and acting as a king, I shall adopt every necessary measure to preserve the peace of the state from dangers of which I am but too forcibly forewarned by the crime of this day.”

From the New York Mercantile Advertiser of the 21st March.

The fast sailing ship Belfast arrived at this port yesterday in 24 days from Antwerp; she made the Banks in 9 days, and has been off our coast five days, having in fact made the passage from land to land in 17 days.

Capt. Bunker has politely favoured the editor of the Mercantile Advertiser with a file of Antwerp papers to the 24th ult. containing Paris dates to the