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## CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.  
DEBATE IN SECRET SESSION

CONTINUED.

Friday, April 3.

Mr. QUINCY expressed, in strong terms, his abhorrence of the measure. He said that if he believed it to be a preparation for war he should have a less malignant sense of the injury, than he felt now as he deemed it a pure, unsoftened, reinstated embargo. The limitation of sixty, or ninety days, gave little consolation or hope to him; because he knew how easily the same power which originated could continue this oppressive measure.

He said that his objection was, that it pretended to be a preparation for war, and was not an embargo, preparatory to war. But that it was an embargo as a substitute for the declaration of war. It was true that it was a step in preparation for war, and by way of preparation for it, by gentleman whose sincerity he was bound to respect. He could not, however, withhold the conviction of his senses and reflections, to their asseveration; nor declare in complaisance to any, let them be as respectable as they might, that he saw in this measure more or less, than its features indicated.

Is this embargo what it pretends to be, preparation for war? In the first place, no attack is expected from Great Britain. It is not suggested that we have a title of evidence, relative to any hostility of her temper, which is not possessed by the whole community. The president has not communicated to us a document, or reason, for the measure. His message merely notifies to us, his will and pleasure.

An embargo, as preparatory to war, presupposes some new and hidden danger not known to the mercantile community. In such case, when the government see a danger, of which the merchant is unapprised, it may be wise to stay the departure of property until the nature and extent of it can be explained. But not a moment longer. For, let the state of things be that of war, or of peace, the principle is precisely the same—the interest which the community has, in the property of individuals, is best preserved by leaving its management to the interest of the immediate proprietor; after he is made acquainted with all the circumstances, at the time, which have a tendency to increase its exposure.

The reason of an Embargo, considered as an incipient step to war, is either to keep our property from depredation abroad, or to keep property which we want at home. Now it happens that the nature of the great mass of our exports is such that there is little danger of depredation from an enemy, we pretend to fear abroad, & we want of the articles, most likely to be exposed, at home. The total export for the last year amounted, as appears by Report of the secretary of the Treasury to Forty five Millions of Dollars. It appears by that report, our exports to Great-Britain and her dependencies, also to those of Spain and Portugal, thirty eight millions for hundred and sand dollars—NEARLY SEVEN EIGHTHS of our whole exports have been continued to be, to the dominions of Great-Britain, from which so much is apprehended. Now, it is at these articles are of value and importance to her.

Even in the case of actual war, our countries, Great-Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, &c. might be questioned, that she would capture our property, before one of our ships was committed, on our coast. It is reasonable, but absolutely necessary, that we should prohibit the export of these articles. This very consideration, in passing of this bill, induced her intention to prohibit the export of these articles, besides, these articles are, in a very great proportion,

perishable, which by this Embargo are to be prohibited from going to market. Which is best? To keep them at home, to a certain loss and probable ruin, or adventure them abroad to a possible loss and a highly probable gain? Ask your Merchant. Ask common sense.

But it is said "we must protect our merchants." Heaven help our merchants from embargo protection!—It is also said that "the present condition of things has been brought upon the country by merchants—that it was their clamour, in 1805 and 1806, which first put congress upon this system of coercive restriction, of which they now so much complain." It is true that in those years the merchants did petition—not for embargo—not for commercial embarrassment and annihilation—but for protection. They, at that time, really thought, that this national government was formed for protection; and that it had at heart the prosperity of all the great interests of the country. If it was a grievous fault, grievously have the merchants answered it. They asked you for relief, and you sent them embarrassment. They asked you for defence, and you imposed embargo. They asked bread, and you gave them a stone. They asked a fish, and you gave them a serpent. Grant that the fault was great; suppose that they did mistake the nature and character of the government; is the penalty they incurred by this error never to be remitted? Permit them once to escape, and, my word for it, they will never again give you any apology, for this destructive protection. If they do, they will richly deserve the misery, which, under the name of protection, you can find means to visit upon them. Your tender mercies are cruelties. The merchants hate and spurn this rigorous defence.

Mr. QUINCY then took notice of an intimation which had been thrown out, in relation to an express, sent off, on the day preceding the message of the President, giving information that an embargo would be proposed the ensuing day.—He said that there was no necessity of speaking of that matter, by distant allusion as if there was any thing that sought concealment. That is not an affair, said Mr. Q. that shows the light. In the honour and the happiness, in conjunction, with another member of this house, from N. York (Mr. Emott) and a senator from Massachusetts (Mr. Lloyd) to transmit that intelligence to Philip Hitt, New-York and Boston, by an express, which started on Tuesday afternoon. In doing this we violated, by obligation, even of the most remote and delicate kind.—The fact, that the committee of foreign relations had decided that an embargo should be proposed on Wednesday, was openly avowed here on Tuesday, by various members of that committee, to various members of this house. Among others, I was informed of it. I shall always be grateful to the gentleman, who gave me that information. Indeed, the whole commercial community are under great obligations to the members of the committee of foreign relations, for their feeling and patriotism in resolving on that disclosure. It enabled us, by anticipating the mail, to give an opportunity for great masses of property to escape from the ruin our cabinet was meditating for them. Yes, sir. To escape into jaws of the British Lion, and of the French Tiger, which are places of refuge, of joy and delight, when compared with the grasp and fang of this Havana Embargo. What was the effect of this information? When it reached Philadelphia, the whole mercantile class was in motion, and all that had it in their power, were flying in all directions from the coming mischief, as though it were a plague, and a pestilence. Look at this moment, on the river, below Alexandria. The poor seamen towing down their vessels, against wind and tide, anxious only to escape from a country, which destroys under the mask of preserving.

It is said that this Embargo is "mere notice to the merchant." If this were the case, why all these pains and penalties? why these grievous bonds, imposed on our coasting trade? If you really intend war, if this measure is timely preparation and not a substitute for it, lay your Embargo—but let it be mere general prohibition, without penalty. You will then have done your duty. If they go and are captured, they have no cause of complaint. But it is said, "shall we feed our enemies?" That question travels the whole plot. It is an Embargo for cov-

er and not for preparation. In reply, I say, yes. Feed your enemies.—If they are in no danger of being reduced by famine, and if the article of food you do not want, & it will perish without a market.

The gentleman who advocate this bill seem to be much offended at some of us do not believe that it is their intention to declare war at the end of the time limited. They treat the suggestion as a reflection on their personal veracity. I question not either the sincerity or veracity of the gentlemen who make these declarations. But those gentlemen must excuse me, if I prefer to reason concerning future events, rather from the nature of things than from the state of their minds. I make no suggestion concerning the intentions of the gentlemen on this floor; but concerning the intentions of our cabinet, and concerning their ability, in relation to actual war, I shall not hesitate both to make suggestions and to state reasonings. And I shall not deem myself precluded from the use of my understanding concerning the result of any measures, because my calculations contradict any man's declared intentions.—The publick has little concern about what you may intend. It has much in what you can execute.

Let me, distinctly, I do not believe that this embargo is preparation for war; but do believe that it is a refuge from the question of declaring war. My reason tells me, that war is not intended, because of your want of preparation, and of your neglect of it. If war were intended, would the men at helm have employed the five months past in a way so utterly inefficient, and inconsistent with such an anticipated state? What have you done during this long season, to put this country into that "armour and attitude" so ostentatiously recommended at the opening of it? What have you done?—Why you have thirty five thousand men upon paper; and in five months you have added about one thousand new recruits to the old establishment. That is to say, you have six thousand men, now on your army rolls. You have a large number of soldiers, but where are the soldiers? We were told last December that on the first day of April we should be before Quebec. And where were we, or that day?—Why—Retiring behind embargo.—What prospect is there that your enlistments will be so rapid as will enable you to raise more men in the ninety days, which are to come, than in the one hundred and fifty which have past? I know there is, on the carpet, a grand scheme, of augmenting the chance of enlistments, by reducing the time of service, from five years to eighteen months. But how does this prognosticate as to the efficiency of the force? This proposition is perfectly characteristic. You want an embargo army, and not a fighting army. Ever since you appointed a collector of a northern seaport, major general, I have been satisfied that what you intended was, an army to fight smugglers and not Canadians.

You prepare to go to war for commercial rights, in ninety days?—Where?—How?—A navy is out of the question. And as to the purpose of arming our merchantmen although that resolution was passed with as much, I believe more unanimity than any other of all those proposed by the committee of foreign relations, it has been laid asleep in the committee; and not a man has ventured to suggest, even that it was to be put into Parliamentary form, much less that it was to be carried into effect.

When I see such a palpable failure in all the means, natural and necessary, for carrying on the war; when I see the exposure of your seaboard; when I see the actual military force instead of being increased in efficiency, in fact, reducing neither promises, nor asseverations, nor oaths shall make me believe that you will go to war, at the end of ninety days. *Obssuit natura.* Nature has decided against you. Instead of that "feast" of war, to which we were invited, at the beginning of the session, we have served up to us the old dish of restrictions. There is no need of the spirit of prophecy to tell the result. The horrors of war will be preached up, very assiduously during our recess. Familiarity with Embargo will diminish its dread. The restrictive system becomes identified with some personal local, party interest. The navigating states are sacrificed; and the spirit and character of the country are prostrated, in the dust, by fear or by avarice.

This Embargo will not serve the American people. But I will tell you what it

may serve; it will serve the French emperor. His interests are apparent. It operates on his enemy by denying our produce to her armies. But where is the American interest? Coercion on Great-Britain is not pretended. If war with this power be really its purpose, then much of this very property ought to be got out of the country. It is useless & must perish if it remains in it. And the resources of the country and its ability for war are augmented by the whole amount of the returns, which its sale would produce.

In every point of view, I look on this measure as a cruel abandonment of our national rights; as impolitic; as deceptive; as calculated to impress on the American people an idea that it is your intention to maintain commercial rights, which its true effect is, to abandon. Here is another effect which it is calculated to produce, and which of all others ought to be avoided—a crisis of this kind to be avoided—its tendency must be to raise a jealousy between the Southern and the Eastern and middle states. The flower and produce of the southern states have had during the whole winter an open trade and free market. Those of the middle and Eastern states have been retained by climate and winter. Nature is just opening for our relief, and the palsying hand of government is now to be extended, to give a death blow to our hopes. It is by a course of policy of this kind that you intend to conciliate affection, or excite confidence? will it not be said, that your own products being sold you were indifferent, what became of ours?

Let me not be understood as objecting to this Embargo, as a preparation for war, although even, as such, its utility is dubious. I object to it, because it is no efficient preparation; because it is not a progress towards honorable war, but is a subterfuge from the question. If we must perish, let us perish by any hand, except our own. Any late is better than self slaughter.

## IN SENATE.

Monday, April 20, 1812.

The President (Mr. Crawford) addressed the Senate as follows:  
"GENTLEMEN,

Upon me devolves the painful duty of announcing to the Senate the death of our venerable fellow citizen George Clinton, Vice President of the U. States. By this afflictive dispensation of Divine Providence, the Senate is deprived of a President rendered dear to each of its members by the dignity and impartiality which he has so long presided over their deliberations, and the nation bereaved of one of the brightest luminaries of its glorious revolution."

On motion of Mr. Smith of N. Y. that the Senate come to the following resolution:

"The Senate being informed of the decease of their distinguished fellow citizen George Clinton, Vice President of the U. States—

"Do resolve, That a committee be appointed jointly with such as may be appointed on the part of the House of Representatives to consider and report measures proper to manifest the public respect for the memory of the deceased, and to express the deep regret of the Congress of the U. S. for the loss of a citizen so highly respected and revered."

The resolution was unanimously agreed to; and Messrs. Smith of N. Y. Smith of Md. German, Gilman and Bradley appointed a committee accordingly.

And the Senate Adjourned.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, April 20.

A message was received from the Senate, announcing the Death of the Vice President of the United States, and the resolution they had adopted.

The House agreed to consider the resolution as above stated.

Mr. Tallmadge said, it was assented to from any want of respect to the memory of the patriot deceased, the member from the state, of New York, not on this occasion address the House. At their request, and being himself a citizen of the state of New-York having served particularly, and on several occasions in the Revolutionary war, with the gentlemen whose death was announced; having long known his services and merits both as a soldier and statesman he took the liberty, in behalf of the Delegation from New-York, to move a concurrence in the resolution of the Senate.