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Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEBATE IN SECRET SESSION
CONTINUED—April 3.

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Mr. RANDOLPH said he had listened with attention to the observations of the gentleman from New York, Mr. Mitchell. The gentleman's reasons, if there is any weight in them, are in favor of letters of marque and reprisal, but not in favor of the ruinous measure now under consideration. When the gentleman justifies himself, in shielding himself under the authority, in his approbation of the measure he should have supposed he ought to have been influenced by authority of a respectable gentleman (meaning the Vice-President) first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen within the state of New-York, who is now insensible to the distresses of the country. The gentleman says, we ought to take our stand among the belligerents. We cannot take this stand. We are but a young people. We are just emerging from a revolution—a revolution which was succeeded by an European war, which has been to us, like the drainings of a farmyard, which has enriched our hamlets and villages to first rate cities. To this we owe the language the gentleman has this evening used. Sir, what has been the fate of those two nations who have undertaken to take their stand among the belligerents. They have become like humble gunboats, in the war of European belligerents. What has become of Prussia? she is extinct. What of Austria? she is crippled. What of Russia—she with a territory and population far beyond ours, has been anxious to take the stand which the gentleman wishes, but she dare not. Sir, we may come to the war, under the name of allies: but we shall be the first servants of those whose cause we espouse. We may escape this conflict with honor. What is honor in a nation? is it honor to cope with those who are so greatly our superiors? It is our duty and interest to wait. He very well knew, that in times of feverish anxiety and impotent restlessness, nothing is more irksome than to preach up patience, and that we ought to wait for events.

Mr. R. said, he did not pay much regard to the argument that the belligerents calculate upon our divisions. It is an old and if he might be permitted to say, a state apology, calculated by ministers to unite a people. The charge of a majority, which is so often made against the minority is futile. It is ridiculous for them to urge it. The President of the United States can indisputably carry his measures in congress, as much as any minister ever did. No minority is, or ever has been of any effect. All experience proves it. He would exhort both houses of Congress to follow the dictates of their own minds and not adopt the sentiment of the gentleman from New-York. There is no danger from an opposition. The President of the U. S. for fourteen years has been omnipotent. The evil has not been from the minority, but from gentlemen not pursuing the dictates of their own understandings.

Mr. R. then brought to the view of the house the diminutive trade of the country to France, and which has been diminished by our own regulations, in comparison with our trade to all the rest of the world. He said, if we are called upon to resist, he would wish to shew our resistance where it is important and necessary. As to the observation of his friend from North-Carolina, (Mr. Macon) that our only alternative now is war; that no proposition had been or could be made as a substitute; he said propositions had been made, and he would pledge his head one might now be made. If both belligerents were viewed with the same eye by our government. Where, asked Mr. R. is the reciprocity, while armed vessels of one only are admitted? As to the existence of the French decrees, the burning of our property on

the high seas is damning proof that they have not been revoked.

The gentleman from New-Jersey (Mr. Bond) the other day proposed 120 days for the period of the embargo, which was negatived. If we agree now to the amendment of 90 days, it is a confession that our argument the other day was right and that those who opposed us were wrong; and it confirms the opinion of the chairman of the committee of foreign relations (Mr. Porter) that it was inexpediency to lay an embargo for sixty days, until we were within sixty days of preparation for war and who said he was in favour of an embargo as a preparatory measure.

He said there could be nothing more cruel to a merchant, who has given \$10 per barrel for flour, and who has incurred the expense of shipping, to carry it to market. It will also be the ruin of the planter. He intreated the house to defer it, until the merchant who has bought on credit of the planter, can turn himself. There is no alternative—the merchant must be ruined, and the planter greatly injured.

He wished we might think of the mills at Brandwine and Petersburg. There is no calculating the benefit which would rise from deferring it a week and no possible good can arise from hurrying it. If it is to ruin the allies upon the Peninsula, upon the argument of gentlemen it cannot answer, as no one can suppose they have not 90 days supply on hand.

Mr. Widgery spoke with much passion & warmth in favor of the embargo & War.

Mr. Stewart said, if it was in order, he would ask the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. Widgery) a few questions. He would ask that gentleman, if he was during the last Embargo a planter?—If so, how did he go?

Mr. Widgery answered that he went by water.

The Speaker observed, these questions were not in order.

Mr. Stewart said, if they were not in order, he would sit down.

Mr. Milnor said, that of however trifling a nature other gentlemen might deem the subject under discussion, he must still be allowed to consider it the most interesting in its nature, and the most important in its consequences, of any that had occupied the attention of the house during this long session; that in many instances, a much more full consideration than it had yet received, had been given to subjects comparatively of far inferior importance; and if the ordinary limits of one day's sitting were not sufficient for the purpose, it had been usual to adjourn the discussion over from day to day, until it was completed. Mr. Milnor said, he could not see why this measure, the declared precursor of almost immediate war, and therefore involving considerations of awful moment to the whole community should be treated in a different way. If gentlemen were not disposed to yield to the suggestions of his friends who had advocated a postponement of a few weeks or of a few days, he trusted, they would not now object, considering the lateness of the hour, to postpone the subject for one day. They would not Mr. M. hoped, compel the house to continue in session, and finally act upon it with bodies and minds too much exhausted for the exercise of that sort of attention which it merited.

He said he abhorred concealment, & therefore would frankly avow, that as the committee of foreign relations had made known their intention to submit this proposition, and as he had no doubt that many persons whose ships and cargoes were nearly ready for foreign voyages, would avail themselves of the information, one object of his feeling anxious for some delay was that they might effect their wishes before this pernicious measure should be carried into effect.

But independent of this consideration, certainly a full opportunity of discussion could not be afforded to members if a vote were taken to night; and without bearing any reflection on gentlemen, Mr. Milnor said he thought they would be better capacitated after the repose of an adjournment for a cool and deliberated decision. To be sure (he said) they had appeared to find some relief from their fatigue in the fun and merriment in which the honorable gentleman from N. York had deemed this a fit occasion to indulge—in wish, said Mr. M. the constituents of that learned gentleman, and others of his fellow Citizens whose ruin will follow the adoption of the measures which he advocates, had

occupied the galleries of this house during the delivery of this amusing speech that we might have seen whether, with all their respect for his talents they could have joined in the merriment excited by the gentleman's sneers at the seriousness, which affected, on this occasion minds differently organized from his own—whether they would have joined in the boisterous laugh, and clapping of hands in which gentlemen had deemed it consistent with their own characters, and the character of this house, so vehemently to indulge.

Mr. M. added, for my own part, Mr. Speaker, I was shocked at the want of feeling and dignity manifested in the speech I have referred to, and feel degraded and mortified that we are to be led like a troop of Bacchanals, piping and dancing to the funeral of the peace and happiness of our country.

Mr Archer inquired of the Speaker, whether, if the gentleman from Pennsylvania intended to close his observations with a mere motion of adjournment, it was in order for him to proceed.

The Speaker said that he thought it was not—that the rules of the house operate equally to exclude debate on the part of the mover of such a proposition, as upon other members of the house.

Mr. Milnor said he had no intention to violate any rule of the house, and yielded with pleasure to the opinion of the chair, he therefore moved to adjourn.—Motion lost.

The question of indefinite postponement was then taken, and determined in the negative—yeas 42, noes 72.

Mr. Smilie then moved that the house concur in the amendment of the senate.

Mr. Randolph moved a postponement till Monday next, that it might produce as little suffering as possible.

Mr. Porter said, he had been against an embargo at the present time, and was the other day in favor of a postponement; he voted against the engrossment, but finally voted in favor of the passage of the bill & he should now vote in favor of the present motion.

From the Baltimore Federal Republican.

THE CHANGE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

We have observed that a rapid change had taken place in the public mind respecting the measures of the present administration, and we instanced its operation in Virginia and Kentucky.—But the continued and steady progress of the reformation is equally surprising. Our readers remember that recently a numerous meeting was held at Reading, in Berks county, which pointedly condemned the embargo, and reprobated war. To-day they are presented with similar proceedings, adopted by a meeting of the citizens of Northampton, assembled at Easton.—The resolutions of both meetings are marked with the spirit of reason and patriotism, and evidence that determined independence, which discards party trammels, when the safety and clearest interests of the community are at stake. These two counties are exceeded in population by only two others in the state, but formerly by none in their uniform and general attachment to democratic politics. We know of no part of Pennsylvania, where there existed a more solid and undivided mass of democratic voters. Their eyes being at length opened, and their judgment clarified by the never failing efficacy of self interest, any further attempt to delude them is out of the question. These important and influential counties will, we doubt not, be found the leaders of many others in the course they have adopted, to make themselves heard by their rulers, and peaceably to produce a change of measures. But should the internal taxes follow the embargo, as they necessarily must, if a war shall ensue, then those men will set no bounds to their opposition. A democratic member of Congress intimately acquainted with the interests, feelings and disposition of the state, declared a few days ago on his way home, whither he was going on leave, that Pennsylvania would not remain quiet under the impolitic laws and alarming proceedings, which were passing in congress, and that although he could not foretell who would be her choice as the next President, he was well persuaded it would not be Madison. No one will now say his estimate is likely to prove very erroneous. The authors of such resolutions as these, are not men that will longer truckle to imposition and cunning. The mask has been torn off, and the shallow artifices so long practised, are become destitute of the charm to stupify, whatever Mr. Ro-

berts, one of their representatives in congress, may think to the contrary. His constituents have given a reply to his volunteer address to Mr. Hollingsworth, which, he must confess, will relieve the latter from any obligation to take further notice of it.

What policy will be pursued to make-up this leeway, and to better the chance of re-election, may well puzzle a head as fertile in stratagems as Mr. Madison's. Will he instantly give up the embargo? That may not save him but will not fail to increase the ridicule and contempt produced by his imbecility and temporising. Can he hurry all his blunders in a war and thereby give tone to the feelings? He cannot. The public are more, if possible opposed to war than to embargo, and instead of war imparting a tone to their feelings it will most probably rouse them into a consuming rage against him and his abettors.

As men attached to our country and partaking in its fate we were opposed to war. We fatigued ourselves and our readers' patience in honest and indefatigable endeavors to reason down the force of the current which led to it.—Finding our labors useless to effect an impression upon a large scale, and that they were invidiously received by the majority, we suffered ourselves to be borne by the stream, since the beginning of the present session of congress. But as party men we had no reason to deprecate war. On the contrary, we knew that war, and even preparations for it, must bring down to the obscurity of a private station whomsoever patronised it among our rulers; nor could we believe they possessed the manliness of spirit to plunge into it. Our forecast has not deceived us. We find administration afraid to proceed, notwithstanding the delusive manifestations it has unceasingly kept up for six months; and on another hand the honest and genuine sentiment of the American people ready to burst fourth in its uncontrollable energy, against a mad & useless conflict, which cannot issue in any good, but must be attended with ruin & havoc, of a duration not to be calculated. Thus, in the uniform result of the elections, which have been held since congress assembled, in the fermenting temper of Pennsylvania, and the aspect of North Carolina and other states, Mr. Madison and his courtiers may perceive that they have dug a grave both deep and wide, which yawns to receive from him the power and its trappings, which have been so foolishly and wilfully abused.

From the New York Evening Post,
PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

There seems to be a wonderful contest at the seat of government, on the subject of responsibility. The great question is—whether the President or Congress, shall be responsible to the people, for the mad and ruinous measures which have already been adopted, and which are about to be adopted? Before the Embargo was recommended, the committee of foreign relations had an interview with the Secretary of State, Mr. Munro, who when asked whether the President was willing to recommend an embargo, said he would propose that measure to Congress, if assured of its meeting the views of a majority of both houses. And when asked whether the country was prepared for war, the Secretary replied—"As to the prepared state of the country, in case of a declaration of war, the President would not pledge himself, NOR TAKE MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY."

These facts were stated to Congress in secret session, by a member of the committee of foreign relations; and the Baltimore "Federal Republican" received this morning, contains the following additional fact on the subject of Presidential responsibility.

"Mr. Madison was waited upon by the committees of both Houses, selected to consider of an adjournment, who, we are told, after explaining the object of their appointment, called upon him for the measures which it was understood the embargo was to introduce. He is said to have answered, that hitherto he had taken more responsibility than HIS SHARE with respect to foreign affairs, but that hereafter he would assume no more than belonged to him!"

Thus, the people are already struggling under the oppressive measures of embargo, and are about to be plunged into the horrors of an ill-judged and unnecessary war, and that by rulers, who have brought these accumulated miseries upon the coun-