

THE MINERVA.

PUBLISHED (WEEKLY) BY WILLIAM BOYLAN.

Two Dollars per Ann
Payable in Advance

Vol. 12.]

RALEIGH, (N. C.) THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 1808.

[No. 617.]

State Legislature.

PROCEEDINGS

DEBATES ON THE BILL FOR PURCHASING ARMS. (THIRD READING.)

(Concluded from our last.)

The amendment to the bill made in the commons was striken out in the Senate and the original bill reinstated. Mr. Cameron now moved again to strike out the bill and to substitute the amendment as it went from the Commons.

Col Porter. I am opposed to the motion, and I did not state my opposition at the other reading, as I was willing to gratify the gentleman from Wake, who complained of his misfortune in having voted alone on two committees, and I was willing to indulge him for once with the vote of this house in his favor— but I must not suffer my politeness to lead me any further. Here I must make a stand.

Since the last reading of the bill, I asked the gentleman who introduced the amendment, if he was acquainted with the establishment making at Rocky Mount in South Carolina. He told me he was not. As there may be other gentlemen in the same situation, I will beg leave to inform the house respecting it. This is a fortress and arsenal establishing by the Federal Government—one or two hundred men have for two years been employed upon it. It will contain magazines of arms and military stores sufficient for all the southern states, which will no doubt be delivered out to the militia, if emergencies require it— This is quite convenient to us, why then need we encumber ourselves with useless expence, when the general government is providing for us? I do not indeed, see the necessity of our having more arms than we now have or could easily obtain. I don't think artillery and bayonets, are the kind of defence proper for our country. The method of bush fighting with rifles, as practised in the last war, is preferable. We then experienced the superiority of that mode, and I think we shall always find it to be superior.

Mr. Cameron did not believe the arsenal establishing at Rocky Mount, was intended for any other purpose but to provide for the regular forces of the United States; and if in cases of great emergency, the militia were supplied from it, the state would no doubt have to pay for the arms they might obtain. As the probability of being supplied at all was uncertain, as the probability of obtaining a sufficiency was still more unlikely; and as the means were out of our reach, and entirely without our controul, it would be idle in the extreme to neglect ourselves, and lean on such a precarious and insufficient support. Most of the other states had armed their own militia: They would not consent to provide both for themselves and us: we ought to arm our own militia. Our welfare, perhaps our independence itself, required that we should do so, and even economy, if we descended to make that a consideration of our preservation, also required it.

Mr. M'Gimpsey said, that if it should be found necessary to arm the militia, the district of Morgan could in a few months, furnish rifles enough for the whole state, and he therefore deemed it improper, under the present circumstances, to purchase arms.

Mr. Baker said it belonged to the Congress of the United States, and not to the individual states to arm the militia. They are required to do so by the constitution. It is improper therefore, for us to perform duties that are assigned to others.

Mr. Gaston. The constitution says Congress may arm the militia, but it does not speak imperatively and say they shall. [Here Mr. G. read the article of the constitution.] And since so many states have at their own expence, armed their militia, it is, as has been stated by the gentleman from Orange, altogether improbable that a majority will now agree to provide for the rest, when there is no obligation upon them to do so. We must do as others have done—provide for ourselves.

Mr. Baker. I still believe, whatever may be the words of the constitution, that Congress will deem it good policy for them to arm the militia. I received a newspaper last night from Washington, which shows that Congress at this time, actually have the business under consideration. I know newspaper authority will not be deemed sufficient authority to legislate upon in all cases—but this paper which is the National Intelligencer, and upon this subject may be entitled to sufficient credit for our purpose. [Here Mr. B. read from the proceedings of Congress, Mr. Randolph's resolution to arm the militia, the discussion which took place thereupon, and of its reference.] It is true, said Mr. B. Congress has not yet passed an act and made an appropri-

tion to purchase, but every body knows that business of this kind is settled in its principle by resolution, and that it now remains with this committee only to bring in a bill; there seems then to be almost a certainty that Congress will provide arms.

But I do not said Mr. B. think it at all probable that we shall have war. The papers inform us that the British government disowns and condemns the conduct of the naval commanders in the affair of the Chesapeake, and that they have appointed a minister extraordinary to this country to make us reparation.— [Here Mr. B. again read from a newspaper.] His uncommon mark of respect shown to us by the powerful and proud nation of Britain shows that her professions of peace are sincere, and as it is the interest of that nation as well as ours that it should be preserved, there is little doubt but it will be. Under these circumstances for us to incur the expence of arming the militia, would be premature and improper.

Mr. Cameron made a very eloquent and animated reply of considerable length, which it is impossible for us to follow. He denied that it followed because Mr. Randolph's resolution for arming the militia had been referred, that the principle was settled: this reference is almost a thing of course, a mark of respect to any member who introduces a resolution; and so far from the principle being settled, he had for reasons already stated, no expectation that it ever would be agreed to.

The assertions of gentlemen with respect to the peaceable disposition of Great Britain, illy accords with that address to the President which not three days ago they forced us to adopt. In that address we say "that our rights are invaded, our citizens seized, our property plundered and our remonstrances disregarded by a nation uniformly and notoriously hostile, and who appeals only to her power to justify her conduct!! And now behold in 3 days, 3 little days, we are told by one of the same gentlemen, that the lion has laid aside his ferocity, and that this hostile nation now breathes nothing but friendship and peace. I leave it to gentlemen themselves to reconcile these contradictions and to say which assertion they mean shall be credited, but after all this explanation it conveys to the mind an impression that there is something wrong, "something rotten in Denmark."

But is it becoming in us, is it worthy of a great and free people, to rest our peace and independence on such a slender foundation as these vague rumours? Instead of looking into the newspapers to see what are the opinions with respect to Great Britain, let us look to ourselves and see what is our condition; let us see if we are prepared as we ought to be, to defend ourselves, no matter what nation is hostile, no matter what nation professes peace.— Wars and tribulations come when no man knoweth, and a nation without the means of defence is a sheep in a den of wolves, always in jeopardy. Shall we then forbear to take measures of defence because of some idle rumors of peace? Shall we like the simple Athenians enquire "Is Phisick? Is Phisick dead?" and strain or relax our exertions according to the news of the day? Is our boasted liberty and independence only a theme for school boy declamation, and not a glorious reality that should call forth the energies of the nation in its defence? No! we do injustice, gross injustice to the state, and we counteract the wishes of the people if we withhold from them the means of defence. Our liberty and independence were bought at a vast expence of blood and treasure, and now we sit here in idle debate whether we shall protect it or not. I will not believe the spirit of our nation is so debased, so degraded as to tolerate such pitiful sentiments and conduct. If gentlemen are courting popularity, if they think by administering to a depraved appetite of avarice sickened and diseased by doctrines of economy, if they think by this paltry measure, because it has economy to recommend it, that they are establishing a prop to a political character, they will find themselves grievously mistaken, and when they return home with this miserable, this beggarly account of their proceedings, their constituents will indignantly frown them into nothing.

Mr. Cameron's motion to reinstate the amendment was put and carried. The Senate still adhered to the original bill and the Commons refusing to recede from their amendment, the bill was consequently lost.

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Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

MONDAY, January 11.

On motion of Mr. Randolph the House took up for consideration the resolution submitted by him a few days since, relative to the conduct of Brigadier General James Wilkinson.

Mr. Clarke laid upon the table the statement which he had been requested to make by a resolution of the House on Thursday last. The statement is long, accompanied by an affidavit of Mr. Clarke to the truth of all the facts therein contained within his own personal knowledge; and to the best of his belief of the truth of what was not within his own knowledge.

Mr. Rowan moved to amend the resolution under consideration by striking out all that part after the word "Resolved," and inserting the following:

Resolved, That a special committee be appointed to enquire into the conduct of Brigadier General James Wilkinson, in relation to his having at any time whilst in the service of the United States, corruptly received money from the government of Spain or its agents, and that the said committee have the power to send for persons and papers, and compel their attendance and production—and that they report the result of their enquiry to this House.

The speaker declared the amendment to be a substitute and of course not in order.

Mr. Randolph said he was decidedly of opinion, that the gentleman from Kentucky ought to have an opportunity of taking the sense of the House on his motion; he therefore withdrew the resolution under consideration: when

Mr. Rowan moved the resolution above stated.

On this resolution a debate of some length took place, in which Mr. Randolph supported, and Messrs. Bacon, Alston, Smilie, Love and Taylor opposed the motion, when

A motion to adjourn was negatived 52 to 51.

Mr. Gardner moved that the subject be postponed till to-morrow, in order that the evidence of Mr. Clark might be printed for information. Negatived, ayes 42.

A motion to adjourn was now carried, ayes 66.

TUESDAY, January 12.

On motion of Mr. Rowan, the House took up for consideration the resolution submitted by him relative to an enquiry into the conduct of General Wilkinson.

The House agreeing to consider it,

Mr. Rowan moved to insert after the word agents, the following amendment: Or in relation to his having during the time aforesaid been an accomplice, or in any way concerned with the agents of any foreign power, or with Aaron Burr, in a project to dismember the Union.

Mr. Love moved to amend the amendment by adding the following: And that a fair copy of the information and papers laid on the Clerk's table relative to the conduct of the said Gen. James Wilkinson, in the matters in question, and any other papers or information which may hereafter be received by the said committee or this House be immediately transmitted to the President of the United States.

No question was taken on either of the amendments or on the resolution.

A debate took place, not confined however to the amendments, but on the general propriety of the enquiry by this House, in which Messrs. Love, Ippes, Rowan, and M. D. Williams supported, and Messrs. Alston, Fisk, Holland, Sloan, and Upham opposed the right and propriety of passing the resolution for enquiry.

About 4 o'clock a motion was made by Mr. Smilie to adjourn, and carried, the House having decided on no one point under consideration.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL CLARK, RELATIVE TO GENERAL WILKINSON.

Read on the 11th January in the House of Representatives of the United States:

And, on the 13th, ordered to be printed, and a copy to be transmitted to the President of the United States.

In obedience to the direction of the House of Representatives, expressed in their resolution of Friday last, I submit the following statement.

I arrived from Europe at New-Orleans in December, 1786, having been invited to the country by an uncle of considerable wealth and influence, who had been long resident in that city. Shortly after my arrival. I was em-

ployed in the office of the secretary of the government. This office was the depository of all state papers. In 1787, General Wilkinson made his first visit to New-Orleans, and was introduced by my uncle to the governor and other officers of the Spanish government.

In the succeeding year, 1788, much sensation was excited by the report of his having entered into some arrangements with the government of Louisiana, to separate the western country from the United States, and this report acquired great credit upon his second visit to New-Orleans in 1789. About this time I saw a letter from the general to a person in New-Orleans, giving an account of Colonel Connolly's mission to him from the British government in Canada, and of proposals made to him on the part of that government, and mentioning his determination of adhering to his connection with the Spaniards.

My intimacy with the officers of the Spanish government, and my access to official information, disclosed to me shortly afterwards some of the plans the general had proposed to the government for effecting the contemplated separation. The general project was, the severance of the western country from the United States, and the establishment of a separate government in the alliance, and under the protection of Spain.—In effecting this, Spain was to furnish money and arms, and the minds of the western people were to be seduced, and brought over to the project by liberal advantages resulting from it, to be held out by Spain. The trade of the Mississippi was to be rendered free, the port of New-Orleans to be opened to them, and a free commerce allowed in the productions of the new government with Spain, and her West-India-Islands.

I remember, about the same time, to have seen a list of names of citizens of the western country, which was in the hand writing of the general, who were recommended for pensions, and the sums were stated proper to be paid to each, and I then distinctly understood that he and others were actually pensioners of the Spanish government.

I had no personal knowledge of money being paid to General Wilkinson, or to any agent for him on account of his pension previously to the year 1793 or 1794. In one of these years, and in which I cannot be certain until I can consult my books, a Mr. La Cassagne, who, I understood, was post master at the falls of Ohio, came to New-Orleans; and, as one of the association with General Wilkinson in the project of dismemberment, received a sum of money, four thousand dollars of which, or thereabout, were embarked by a special permission, free of duty, on board a vessel which had been consigned to me, and which sailed for Philadelphia; in which Mr. La Cassagne went passenger. At, and prior to this period, I had various opportunities of seeing the projects submitted to the Spanish government, and of learning many of the details from the agents employed to carry them into execution.

In 1794 two gentlemen of the names of Owens and Collins, friends and agents of General Wilkinson, came to New-Orleans. To the first was entrusted, as I was particularly informed by the officers of the Spanish government, the sum of six thousand dollars, to be delivered to general Wilkinson, on account of his own pension, and that of others. On his way, in returning to Kentucky, Owens was murdered by his boat's crew, and the money, it was understood, was made away with by them. This occurrence occasioned a considerable noise in Kentucky, and contributed, with Mr. Power's visits at a subsequent period, to awaken the suspicion of General Wayne, who took measures to intercept the correspondence of general Wilkinson with the Spanish government, which were not attended with success.

Collins, the co-agent with Owens, first attempted to fit out a small vessel in the port of New-Orleans, in order to proceed to some port in the Atlantic states, but she was destroyed by the hurricane of the month of August of 1794. He then fitted out a small vessel in the Bayou St. John, and shipped in her eleven thousand dollars, which he took round to Charleston.

This shipment was made under such peculiar circumstances, that it became known to many, and the destination of it was afterwards fully disclosed to me by the officers of the Spanish government, by Collins and by general Wilkinson himself, who complained that Collins, instead of sending him the money on his arrival, had employed it in some wild speculations to the West-Indies, by which he had lost a considerable sum, and that in consequence of the mismanagement of his agents, he had received but little advantage from