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No. 673.

Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

January 30.

On raising the Embargo, and authorizing
of Marque and Reprisal—continued.

Nicholas moved to fill the blank in the
with the first day of June: Mr.
named the fourth day of March; and
R. Williams named the fifteenth day
of January.

Randolph moved to strike out the words
day of " " for the purpose of
"forthwith"—Motion to strike out
by a considerable majority.

The question recurring on filling the blank
the first day of June.

Randolph, as the gentleman, the mo-
of the resolution (Mr. Nicholas) was not
when he had given the reasons why
ought, if the embargo was to be repeal-
should be removed immediately, repeat-
—He wished our own citizens to reap
advantage from an early repeal. Or
we, he asked, by a singular fatality in
measures only to injure ourselves, and
our adversaries and the most dishonest
of our own community.

Dana was opposed to a continuance of
embargo till the first of June. Since it
is generally understood through the
country that the embargo was to be further
prolonged, many capitalists had forestalled the
effects so as to secure to themselves a mo-
nopoly of the foreign articles of the greatest
value, thereby to command an excessive
price at the expense of the distressed part of
the community. As respected them Mr. Dana
said that he had not a wish that the dura-
tion of the embargo should be protracted, that
they might realize their gains and make poor
their prey; and if there were any de-
sires of our citizens whom he could wish
injured by a removal of the embargo,
they would certainly be the persons. There
was another reason why he did not wish the
embargo to continue so long. However im-
portant it was that the general authority of the
Government should be maintained as respect
these states, was it not known that the reins
of government, from their extreme tension,
were in the hands of the administration?

Were not their acts placed at defiance,
since the passage of the last act for
the embargo? Look at the whole
of the frontier, said he; recollect the faci-
lity of transportation on the ice and snow—
select with what facility in this season the
ice and lumber, &c. will pass from Ver-
mont into the British provinces. As respect-
the whole of that frontier, Mr. Dana said,
it would be in vain to attempt to enforce the
embargo laws. The mould was already bro-
ken which retained our produce; and it
to be feared that the whole would soon
be swept away. The question, which now
presented itself to the consideration of the House
was this and it was requisite that it should be
decided promptly—whether, if the acts of govern-
ment were set at defiance, the authority of
the government should be sustained or not—
acts of the government were placed at
defiance, he said, Congress had but to decide
promptly to enforce them by arms, or to aban-
don them. Did they mean to hesitate be-
tween advancing and retiring? If you mean
to retire, (said he) do it whilst you can—
it will seem to be an attention to the
sufferings of the community, in-
stead of giving to those who set your laws at
defiance, the signal of your defeat and the evi-
dence of their triumph. Mr. Dana asked, if
men had estimated what would take
place between this day and the first day of
June, did they conceive the force that it
would be necessary to employ to enforce the
embargo? Before they decided that point it would
be well to pause. Did gentlemen recollect
how much danger menaced the sentiment of
loyalty to their country, when foreign in-
juries (as the liberty of trading derived
from the contiguity of the British provinces)
were given to the citizens of any portion of a
country which refused to allow them those pri-
vileges? Need I remind gentlemen, asked Mr.
Dana, of a circumstance illustrative of my idea?
In the navigation of the Mississippi was
the command of the Spaniards, before the
treaty of San Lorenzo was carried into effect,
which gave the opportunity which that state of
affairs gave to the agents of the Spanish govern-
ment, for making attempts to detach the
western states from the Union. How far they
succeeded I do not undertake to say; but the
well known, that some men of consider-
able distinction were so far drawn aside from
their attachment to the Union, as to give
assistance to the intrigue; and the fact
has since come to light, the public authority of
the states, (Kentucky) have undertaken
the examination and investigation of the sub-
ject. I speak of this not as a reproach, but as
evidence of the temptation which is of-
fered to a portion of the people, having an
eye to any

a foreign power, which is denied them by
their own government. I will not pursue the
subject, sir; for it is unpleasant to dwell on
subjects which may even tend to jeopardize
the Union. But I deem it useless to rely on
the patriotism of the people; when the govern-
ment forgets the cement of patriotism.
What is country? That portion of the globe
where we have friends, freedom and protec-
tion. It is the reciprocation of good offices,
which is the cement of private friendship. It
is the reciprocation of protection and support,
between the government and individual, a re-
ciprocation of benefits, which is the cement
of allegiance.—But, sir, when the power of
the government is exerted merely to check
the ordinary industry of the community, when
the people feel the power of their government
in being blockaded in port by it, instead of be-
ing protected against blockade by an enemy,
what must be their feeling? Patriotism is too
precious a feeling to make many experiments
upon it.—Really, sir, I should not wish to know
in relation to many of my fellow citizens,
what would be the extreme point to which
their patriotism could be stretched. There
appears to be reason to apprehend that the
reins of government are already failing in the
hands of government. I should therefore wish
my countrymen to be no longer exposed to
being alienated from their government, and
that the government should not be placed in a
situation to have its acts set at defiance.

Mr. Troup observed, that he could not see
the propriety or expediency of fixing on a day
beyond the adjournment of the present Con-
gress, on which this change of measures
should take place. What would be the effect
of it? It could be considered in no other point
of view than as a declaration of war, to be
binding on the next Congress. The mere de-
claration could not be considered as adding
coercion to our measure; for whatever honor
foreign nations might possess (and he believed
they possessed little indeed of that) they
certainly did possess courage, and were not to
be frightened into an accommodation with us
by such a threat. But the measure was not
obligatory and binding on the next Congress,
even admitting that it should be composed of
the identical individuals who composed the
present Congress. There was no authority
in the constitution by which we could bind
them, unless indeed this declaration involved
a matter of contract.—And to be sure, he said,
it might be considered in some sort a matter
of contract; a political contract of a singular
quality—a contract between this great govern-
ment, and an unruly faction in New-England,
which threatened opposition to the laws, and
was breaking out into rebellion. Yes, sir,
said Mr. Troup, you come out with a solemn
measure, and tell them if they will forbear to
rebel till the first day of June next you will
agree to issue letters of marque. It is an in-
vasion even of the powers of the next Con-
gress, supposing it to be composed of the
same men as constitute the present Congress
to bind them to declare war, not under the
circumstances then existing, but under those
which existed at the time you were pleased to
enter into this declaration. But not only will
this measure not be obligatory; but it is very
possible that the next Congress may be as
different in its composition from the present,
as the present Congress is from the Junto of
Spain, or the British parliament. In every
point of view therefore, Mr. Troup said, he
conceived it a futile proposition.

Mr. Milnor was opposed to postponing the
repeal of the embargo till the first day of
June; for which he assigned the same rea-
sons which he gave before for proposing the
fourth day of March. If it was so extremely
oppressive as to excite discontent and rebelli-
on, its extremely unfavorable effects to our-
selves would be a sufficient reason for its re-
peal. Mr. M. said, that although he would
fix a day for the repeal of the embargo, he
could not carry his civility to the belligerents
so far as to give them notice on what day we
would commence war against them. Were
we in such a situation that we could instantly
bid defiance to Great-Britain? When war
comes, said he, it will be proper to consider
whether it be politic, proper and necessary?
If it be politic and the nation cannot continue
out of it without a sacrifice of its honor, then
let us have it, and not take it in this manner,
declaring to the belligerents that if they do
not come forward on a certain day we will
commence hostilities against them. The
next Congress will be better able to decide
what will be proper on the first day of June
than we can now do; and if we are not in-
stantly to go to war, it will be decorous, wise
and right in us to let the question rest till the
next Congress come here in the end of May,
and leave the responsibility with them.

Mr. D. R. Williams said if ever a man's
mind was embarrassed on a topic on which he
had to legislate, he confessed that his was.—
He saw a measure and a system which he
thought susceptible of the clearest demonstra-
tion to be more warlike than war itself, a sys-
tem which preserved this nation in peace and
happiness, about to be abandoned, and for the

causes which had been assigned. When the
late intelligence had reached him from the
north-east, he said it had borne a character
most distressful to every man who valued the
integrity of the government. It appeared to
him to be of such a character as not to leave a
doubt as to what course should be pursued.—
There could be but two courses to pursue, ei-
ther to extend the strong arm of the govern-
ment, or to abandon the law. Under that im-
pression (said Mr. W.) chusing not to enforce
the law with the bayonet, I thought it proper
to acknowledge to the House that I was ready
to abandon the embargo. I did talk about in-
surgency and rebellion too, sir; and the re-
proof which I received from the gentleman
from Kentucky (Mr. Rowan) was correct;—
that the best way to drive people into rebellion
is to accuse them of it. Perhaps, sir, I ought
to apologize to the gentleman from Virginia
(Mr. Nicholas) for calling up this subject,
when the resolution was proposed by him, and
he was not disposed to call it up. I applied
to him to call it up, and understood that it
would be disagreeable to him on account of his
indisposition. But I felt myself obliged to call
it up, and not to permit such a proposition to
lie on the table beyond the moment when I
could get to act on it. Like the gentlemen
from Pennsylvania and Georgia, I am disposed
to be should act for ourselves and not for
the next Congress. To me, sir, the embargo
always appeared a blessing to this country.—
True, it has always operated to prevent us
from making money, but that was all that
was injurious in its operation; and, sir, I was
so much of a fool, had so little knowledge of
human nature as to believe that there was pa-
triotism enough, love of country enough, pride
enough in the nation, to induce its freemen
to be willing to abstain from making money,
for the good of the nation. I have been gre-
giously mistaken, sir, I thought I was legis-
lating for freemen who valued their rights; that
whilst they were the only people in the world
trusting with arms to defend themselves, they
would have scorned to take money for the
prostitution of their country. I did not think
there was a man in the nation who would act
the part of a pimp to his mother. It has been
so, however; and dreadful, cruel must be the
torments of those who have been accessory to
it.

[Mr. Williams here went at a considerable
length into an examination of the arguments
of Mr. Pitkin on Saturday last in reply to a
former speech of Mr. W. on the subject of
the embargo.]

We have but small choice of courses to pur-
sue, said Mr. Williams. One course is to
admit foreign vessels into our ports so long as
the embargo continues. Now, though I do
believe that we should be perfectly justifiable
in enforcing the embargo and suffering foreign
vessels to come and take away our produce,
as a punishment to a certain class of men in
the country for their treasonable conduct;
yet, sir, legislating for a whole nation, not for
any particular class, I can not consent to that.

Another course is that recommended by a
gentleman from New-York (Mr. Gardener)
to go back and undo all you have done. Will
you tread back your steps and go back with
him to Jay's treaty? I have no hesitation in
saying that if we were even placed in the si-
tuation in which we then were, I would not
accept of it. The treaty carried a feature in
it which ought to have damned it at the first
view. It took property from one portion of
the community to pay for advantages to the
other. Yes, sir, it did. You know that a so-
lemn stipulation was made in a treaty of peace
to pay us for the property they had stolen from
us; and you and the House know it was treat-
ed away to secure commercial advantages;
and yet, thank God, the southern states did
not rise in rebellion against it.

We must select either a continuance of the
embargo or war, sir. If ever there were a
number of men in this world who had the des-
tinies of a nation in their grasp, the opposi-
tionists to the embargo have that high power.
There cannot be a doubt, if excitement had
not been made, or if after it was made it had
not been allayed by those who excited it—and,
sir, I have no wish now to excite a disagree-
able sensation in the breast of any man; for
I have said enough on this head heretofore—
if they would now attempt to allay the fervor
instead of increasing it, that it would be put
down; and if put down, there cannot be a
doubt but we should be preserved in peace,
and gain stipulations of peace honorable to
our country. For God's sake, let me conjure
gentlemen not to forget that we have a coun-
try. If they repeal the embargo, they must
support war, because their character—yes,
sir, their character as men loving their coun-
try is at stake. Will you drive us to a repeal
of the embargo, and make no resistance? Are
you ready to sit down quietly under the im-
positions laid upon you? You have driven us
from the embargo. The excitements in the
east render it necessary that we should enforce
the embargo with the bayonet or repeal it. I
will repeal it—and I could weep over it more
than over a lost child. If you do not resist,

you are no longer a nation—you dare not call
yourself so—you are the merest vassals con-
ceivable. Sir, if gentlemen will not support
us in a war, and I give fair notice that if we
take off the embargo I am for war—they must
support it, or they will sink the character of
the nation. If they will support neither war
or embargo, if they destroy the effect of both,
I ask you, sir, does not the prostitution of the
character of the country lie at their doors?
If they mean submission, I will thank them
to say so. It some how or other happens that
republicans are thought to be friendly to
France, and Federalists to Great-Britain. I
believe neither imputation to be correct to the
extent to which it is carried. But it is a fact
that the British ear is open to that side of the
question sooner than to us. Now, sir, I ap-
peal to the minority, who hold the destinies
of the nation in their grasp, for they can en-
force the embargo without the bayonet.—I beg
them, if they will not declare war, that they
will do the best they can for their country. If
avarice has so seized on our hearts, as to take
away wholly the love of country, (and assured-
ly it has if we submit) for God's sake let me
entreat gentlemen to make the best terms they
can for us—to secure the kind protection of
the British government for us—to procure us
the miserable boon that the tax on us may be
collected here without compelling us to go to
Britain to pay it. Sir, the blood which runs
through my veins, tells me I was not born to
be a British subject; it tells me that the op-
position to us must have sucked the same milk
—that we are of the same family. Then let
us with one heart and hand take hold of war.
But, says the gentleman from Connecticut,
(Mr. Tallmadge) what will you gain by it? It
is not money, sir, I want. You lose money
by a war; but you gain your rights; you gain
the chance of dying honorably in your coun-
try's defence instead of submitting, without re-
sistance, and that will be a consolation to thou-
sands, if their country is to be disgraced. Yes,
sir, solemn as the reflection is, if we take off
the embargo I am for WAR, and I hope the
whole House will be for it.—It is true that it
brings along with it miseries without number.
You will see fear, despair, and all the family
of distresses, driving ruthlessly over the coun-
try. But it will be infinitely less of suffering
to die in defence of the country than to live in
bondage. I will not submit. I will plunge
into the gulf, and I hope every man will follow
me, when we have lost our mantle of peace—
the embargo.

Mr. Dana thought it proper, if gentlemen
talked of dying for their country, that they
should die usefully; for really the mere dying
could be of no service whatever, to the coun-
try. He said, he was not disposed at this time
to go into a discussion of the embargo subject
generally, but he would state one general po-
sition, viz. that the existing policy is a novelty
in the history of human society. From the
earliest period of time, Mr. Dana said, there
were no proofs that the system ever did or ever
could produce the events which gentlemen
propheesied. When then this was an utter no-
velty on earth, when gentlemen proposed a
course never known to savage or civilized life,
were they not bound specifically to state facts
incontrovertible in support of it? And what,
(said Mr. Dana) have they done? Avowed a
general broad political faith, and wholesale
predictions, that it will produce an effect, in
defiance of all experience. And am I bound
to say, when gentlemen come forward thus,
that the plan will succeed? The thing is ag-
ainst you, sir. No ardor of patriotism, in-
trepidity of courage, or excess of devotion
could make it effectual. He said, that the
contest was so unequal in the nature of things,
that the U.S. could not succeed in it. No-
thing but super-human aid could make it suc-
ceed.—When gentlemen came to examine in-
to facts, it would be found that they omitted
to examine the bearing of the thing in gener-
al or in detail. When had any officer of the
government, or any member of either house
of Congress, undertaken to give a view of the
relative dependence of the countries of the
world upon each other. As far as commerce
is essential to the existence of Great Britain,
(said Mr. D.) even now she has the whole
world before her. As far as commerce is es-
sential to our existence, the whole world is
shut to us, by the embargo. Even say that
Britain loses one-fourth of her revenue, we lose
the whole of ours. They lose a part, but a
moderate part indeed of their commerce,
whilst we lose the whole. The embargo can-
not succeed in the nature of things, and I am
not astonished that you do not find it on any
of the diplomatic correspondence, stated as a
measure of coercion, because it would be no
easy matter to prove it to be so. What are
you to operate on foreign governments by this
measure? Famine and insurrection are to be
your chosen troops, your auxiliaries to over-
turn their systems. You assail them by fam-
ine, which is to call up insurrection. This
is, I think, the language of the advocates of
the embargo. And can I wonder that it is re-
verberated in our official diplomatic corres-
pondence, as a measure of hostility? Mr.