



AND

North-Carolina State Gazette.

Our are the plans of fair & delightful Peace, Unwarp'd by party rage, to live like Brothers.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1810.

No. 546

MR. MACON'S SPEECH,

ON THE COMMERCIAL INTERCOURSE BILL.

Mr. Macon said, it was no question...

If the bill be rejected, what pacific system will you adopt?...

I should like to be informed, whether the gentlemen who talk so much about war have turned their attention to the existing state of our commerce?...

ces, without a single republic among them. I ask gentlemen to tell me, what must have been the condition of the people during all these wars and revolutions?...

The U. States are now the only neutral nation in the civilized world, to them is committed the sacred trust of preserving neutral rights, and to no nation are they more valuable; and to those who talk so much about war, permit me, sir, to enquire, whether they can seriously believe we shall be so likely to do this by war, against those who do not respect them either on land or water, as by other means;...

I should like to be informed, whether the gentlemen who talk so much about war have turned their attention to the existing state of our commerce?...

ures war pell-mell, to get clear of this bill, which is said to be downright submission. This seems to me, especially in the present state of our affairs, to be a new sort of submission. Is it submission, openly to tell the two most powerful nations in the world, you shall not come here? No it is not. The very prohibition is an act of sovereignty. While one declares it to be submission to France, another declares it to be submission to England; though both agree that it is submission, they disagree as to the power to which it submits. Nay, sir, it has been said, that this is entirely a mercantile question, and that farmers and planters have nothing to do with it. Then farmers and planters ought not to pay any part of the expence, which may grow out of the present state of our affairs. The fact, however, is, that the nation is made up of farmers, planters, merchants, mechanics and professional men, and all have an interest in the question, and it surely affects the pecuniary interest of the planter and farmer, more than it does that of the others. Double freight does not affect the merchant. He makes his profit, and the agricultural people pay it. From every expence attending his trade he lays an additional advance on his goods, and the agricultural people make all good to him. Besides, sir, the President in his first message told the House, that he had authorized our minister at London, to inform the British government, that another minister would be received, undoubtedly with a view to adjust our differences by negotiation. What would be thought of our government, if after making this communication to a foreign power, we were to do that which some gentlemen have told us we ought to do—make open and manifest war? Nay, sir, suppose Great Britain should send another minister, and instead of his finishing the administration ready to receive him, and to treat with him as he expected, he is met by a declaration of war, and told to return home. This would not be like the dismissal of the late minister for intemperate expressions in his letters; to me it seems there would be nothing candid, nothing honorable in transacting our national affairs in this way, it would be a departure from the principles which have always governed the nation.

There is nothing in the bill which prevents the Legislature from adopting any other measure—he bill may pass, and the House may hereafter adopt such energetic measures as may be thought advisable.

A gentleman from New-York (Mr. Root) lately told us, that which we have been told before, that the bill was resistance to France and submission to England. He has completely proven that Napoleon had submitted to England, as he did that we were about to do so. He told us that Napoleon by his folly was aiding England to carry her orders in council into effect. If, then, to carry her orders into execution be submission, Napoleon has submitted; but neither his folly nor the bill on the table are submission.

My colleague, (Mr. Sawyer) who is for very strong measures, seems to think that the friends of the bill consider it a certain cure for every complaint to which the body politic may be subject. None of them have as yet said so much for it. All that they have contended for, according to my understanding, is this, that in the present state of Europe and of the U. States, they have not been able to discover a better system, a system that would operate less on ourselves, and, at the same time, have some operation on England & France. My colleague said a great deal about war and energy—I have already endeavored to shew, that war, under the existing circumstances of the nation, would be injurious, I will only add that by declaring it at this moment, you would put it in the power of G. Britain to take probably one hundred millions of our property and twenty or thirty thousand of our sailors.

means we have, with the end to be obtained. He thinks this the proper time to make war on Britain, because she is on her last prop and almost ready to fall. If it be so, there is no occasion for us to give our aid to kick her down. Let Britain have the sole credit and honor of putting her down. I understood my colleague to say, that the friends of this bill were desirous of having a war with Britain, but were afraid to declare it—In answer, it is not the case with me—I am not afraid to declare my sentiments upon any question, either of war or of peace. I am not desirous of war with any nation on earth, nor will I consent, in the present state of the world, to enter the war which has so long ravaged Europe—either on the side of France or England. But whenever the national government shall declare war, I shall be found as ready to adopt the necessary measures to carry it on successfully, as any man in this House or in this nation. Again, he told us that this is the very time to make the attack, because all the nations of Europe are leagued against her—This is no reason with me because I am most decidedly against joining any European league, or having alliance with any European power. I am opposed to joining the fate of this happy country to that of any nation in the world; nor do I wish to have a minister at the Congress, which Napoleon is to call to settle maritime rights and secure the freedom of the sea. I have no faith that it will be done by him. Give him power on the water, and he will do as he has done on land. Give Britain power on the land, and she will do as she has done on the water—but above all, this weak bill produced the second message of the President of the U. S. If that message has any bearing on the question, according to my weak understanding, it is most decidedly in favor of the bill—indeed, it is not easy to conceive how the President with propriety could have said more in favor of any measure before the Legislature than he has in favor of this; but the bill ought to be decided on its merits, and not on the opinion of the President.

A gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Ross) is good enough to allow, that those who may vote for the bill, will do it on pure motives. The object of the bill, and of those who support it, is to preserve the peace of the nation, if possible. The gentleman quite astonished me, he made an inflammatory war speech, and before he sat down, said he wished for peace, if war could be avoided. He and those who support the bill agree in their wish to preserve peace; we propose the bill as the best means of doing this, which he calls submission—he proposes nothing—if, then our plan is submission, to do nothing will be submission also—a war speech to conclude in favor of peace is a little strange to me. Were I for war, I should be for making the necessary preparation, to call forth the resources and the energy of the nation, to go at it tooth and nail. He also said, that a middle ground had been adopted in the bill, and that the middle ground was submission—Without referring to Esop or to Croesus, to decide whether it be so or not, it seems to me, that common sense would, in the present case, decide that the middle ground was neither war nor submission; but the bill contains something like old embargo principles—these seem to be quite as much dreaded as the fatal submission which the bill contains. There is not any thing in it like embargo, tho' the gentleman pays me a compliment which I do not deserve, when he says, that the chairman who reported the bill was an embargo man, and nothing but embargo principles was to be expected—if he knew the committee, he would not believe that any chairman could report a bill which they did not approve, and he would also believe that they understood embargo principles. Yes, sir, I am an embargo man, and hesitate not to say, that the day Congress gave up the embargo for the non-intercourse, it there be submission, that day it began; but I do not consider that submission, and the bill is undeniably a better measure than the non-intercourse; if we wished war either against France or against England or against both, instead of the non-intercourse act, we ought to have made a declaration of war: We then had our sailors, our vessels and our property at home. I cannot perceive the great wisdom and undaunted courage in these war-speeches, when there is no war motion.

The same gentleman has brought another embargo charge against me: It is this, that I mingle it with every thing I say. He certainly ought not to complain, for he has said twice as much about war as I have about the embargo. The fact is, a gentleman from N. York (Mr. Gold) first brought it into debate the present session; to him I replied. I have always been willing to defend it, and never ashamed to own that I approved it; and a great majority of the nation also approved it. The embargo, as well as every other measure which has been brought forward, in opposition to the decrees of France and the orders of England, have been opposed, while all are saying they will not submit to either—to say the least of the embargo, it kept us a year out of the war, and the non-intercourse, with all its imperfections, has probably kept us out of it another, and if this bill shall preserve the peace of the country only one year more, the committee will have deserved well of the nation.

It is true, that I was willing to limit the bill to the end of the present session of Congress, under the expectation that we might by that time completely understand its effect. If it should prove, as I believe it will, a beneficial measure, there would be no difficulty in continuing it longer, and if on experience, it should be found not to produce any advantage, the sooner it expired the better. I have patiently attended to the objections which have been stated to the bill; but is the gentleman himself absolutely certain that he is right?—that he cannot be mistaken; is he like the French girl, of whom Dr. Franklin told the story in the convention, who enquired that she always found every body in the wrong and herself always to the right.—The short limitation is an objection which was not expected from those who are opposed to every part of the bill and are in favor of war; one would naturally suppose the shorter the limitation the more agreeable to them.

I understood the gentleman to say, that the friends of the bill had called on him, and others who think with him, to join and aid them in passing it. I deny it as to myself; I call on no man for aid. The bill must stand or fall on its own merits. It has never been and never will be my practice to be running about the city by day or by night, prowling after men to support any measures I may propose; if right, they ought to be adopted—if wrong, they ought to be rejected. To have solicited the aid of the men who declare the bill to be submission, and that nothing but war will save the nation, would be, in my opinion, to have insulted them. It is not only asking them to give us their opinion, but also asking them to do an act which they consider submission, and of course disgraceful at least. Not have I requested or demanded of them to come out as party men to support the bill.—No, sir, I have never asked any man to yield his judgment to party. To endeavor to pass a bill on such principles, would be to acknowledge, that there was no reason for passing it—in fact, that it ought not to pass.

The same gentleman says the present discussion will, at the next election, put men who are for energetic measures in Congress, from the Eastern & Southern States. How this may be, I cannot tell, but it is a good while since these two portions of the Union have been coupled together before. As to the people from the East, personally, I know but little about them, having never been among them; if, however, a judgment may be formed of them, from their members here, they will be found as tenacious of their opinions as most people are of theirs. The gentleman has forgot that their representatives adhere so close to their opinions, that not very long since, he had to sit up all night to get a vote. Whatever may be the decision of those in the South, whom I represent, it will be perfectly agreeable to me; but I am yet to learn that the people in the East and South are more tickle than those of the Middle States.

It is true, that the people in the South do not make a practice of meeting to pass fiery resolutions, which in general mean nothing more than that the first mover of the meeting and of the resolutions wants an office. On the day of election they pass upon the conduct of their representatives, and then tell them whether they have done well or not.— [Concluded in the last page.]