



Our motto is the plan of fair, delightful Peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers

FRIDAY, JULY 15, 1814.

No. 773

VOL. XV.

MR. MACON'S SPEECH ON THE PASSAGE OF THE LOAN BILL.

(CONTINUED.)

I agree with the gentleman from Massachusetts (Col. Pickens) that wars have been heretofore carried on for property, & will add, that the quasi war with France was for property, and those then in power voted money without any difficulty whatever. But this war differs from all others in this respect, at least, that it is carried on for the rights of the poor and not for the property of the rich, and this is the only country in the world where the rich and the poor are really equal, and where the poor have as much power as the rich; in all others the poor are almost friendless and without any share in the government. This war is not for property. Therefore it is that those who claim to have the most wealth, are not willing to vote money to support a war carried on for the rights of the poor.—The rich are not always willing to relieve the poor, or Lazarus would not have remained unfed at the rich man's door, nor would our poor sailors have wanted the protection of their country or the aid of those who had got rich by their voyages; more noise would have been made for the impressment of 20 rich merchants than for the impressment of twenty hundred poor sailors, and in a war to release and protect them the want of money would not have been heard of. The war of the Revolution was to prevent being taxed without our consent, and I should be glad to know whether there is one man in the nation who had rather be impressed than to pay a trifling tax on tea, imposed without his consent or that of his representative. Impressment must be also without his consent. That war was to prevent being taxed when colonies, by the British Parliament, without our consent; and this war is to prevent being taxed now we are independent, by the British government, without our consent; for impressment is a tax of the most grievous kind; all taxes must be paid by the produce of labor, but the tax of impressment not only deprives the sailor of the right of laboring for himself, but confines him and forces him to fight not the battles of his country, but those of a foreign nation, who taxes him, receives the tax, and forces him to fight her battles; in fact, impressment is not only a tax, but the most detestable tyranny and oppression that ever was practised by one independent nation over another. Can it be possible, Mr. Speaker, that the men who so gloriously resisted the tax on tea; the men by whose patriotic efforts you now sit in that chair, would, when independent, submit to impressment, nay, that they would have collected documents to prove impressment, a fact known to every man in both nations? What would have been their feelings, when they knew that their countrymen who had been impressed before war was declared, had after it was declared been ignominiously flogged for refusing to do duty; that is, to fight against their own country? Would the tax on tea have gone to the hearts of these men, and impressment have been borne by them with patience? Impressment is as much worse than the tax, as freedom is better than impressment. A complaint has been made with a very long face, that this war will cost money. The friends of these gentlemen made no such complaint in the quasi war. It is however, certainly true, that it will cost money, and so has every war that ever was. And if we determine not to defend our national rights, we shall soon have none to defend. But, sir, had calculations like these we have heard deterred our fathers from carrying on the war in which they were engaged, we should not have been free, nor now debating in this elegant hall, whether American sailors should also be free. They wanted both men

and money, but they persevered to the end, and obtained that for which they contended—liberty & independence. If we only follow their example we shall establish sailors' rights and free trade. Much has been said about a national debt. No man dislikes one more than I do. It never was my opinion that a national debt was a national blessing. And I dislike taxes as much as I do a national debt; but I do not dislike them quite as much as I hate impressment, and before I would acknowledge the right of G. Britain to impress American citizens, I would bear as much of both as I could without complaining. I do not pretend to have more feeling on this subject than others have.—Every man in the nation can form a correct opinion on the question, by supposing his own son impressed and treated as others have been. It seems to me, that to the parent there could be but little, if any difference between impressment and death.—This war has not been supported by me because a particular man is President, but because I thought we should lose, one by one, all our national rights, unless we did defend them, and because I thought the sailors had the same right to protection that other people had. I care but little who is President; all I ask of him is to administer the executive part of the government well and economically. No President will ever please all, and he that has faithfully done the best he could for the nation, and is fully satisfied thereof, and has a clear conscience toward his God and neighbor, will probably be the best off here and hereafter. But that which seems to astonish those most who oppose the bill, is that the backwoods men, who never saw a ship before they came to this city, should undertake to defend sailors' rights. By the constitution it is as much their duty to defend them as it is the duty of any other part of the nation; but, leaving their constitutional duty out of the question, nothing is more natural than that their situation should compel them to feel for the distress of their countrymen in any part of the union, especially too when their distress is produced by the same power which distresses their countrymen. It may be the effect of sympathy, something like this—If you, sir, were travelling and to call at a house where you were not acquainted with any person who lived in it, and to find the father or mother of the family or one of the children dead, you would immediately feel for the distress of the living and sympathize with them. The case of the backwoodsmen is much stronger than this; because, when they hear of impressment, they immediately think of their relations and neighbors who had been murdered and scalped by the savage foe, the ally of the power who impresses their countrymen. These backwoodsmen want no defence for the part which they have acted. The zeal with which they have defended their national rights both in this house and the field, want no defence. If a single waggoner, tobacco roller or hog-driver from the middle country should be scalped on his way to market or impressed when at market, that whole country would immediately have feelings similar to those of the western people and the people of Georgia, and like them convince the world that freemen roused are invincible. During the revolutionary war it was not whispered that the then backwoodsmen had never seen a ship or salt water, or that they did not understand the tax on tea, or the Boston port act, and they certainly understand the cause of this war as well as they did the cause of that; and when their assistance was gladly seized and their valiant deeds of that day have not been surpassed by those of late. That war we have been told was for property. They might then take part without a complaint; but as this is now for poor sailors' rights, they

ought not to meddle with it! Many of the men who fought during the revolution, I imagine never saw nor tasted tea when the war commenced. I well remember that in the part of the nation where I live, it was used but in few families, and in some of the few only on Sundays or on some great occasion, and in that part of the country the people were not plagued with tories. Why at this time discuss the causes of the war? They have been discussed before: but then there was no negotiation on foot. I most sincerely wish that the negotiation may produce a treaty which shall be satisfactory to every man in the nation; one would naturally have supposed, if we had not seen to the contrary, that the hearts of all men in the country would have been turned at this time to two great points: The happy termination of the war, by the restoration of an honorable peace, or in case the negotiation failed, to the manner best calculated to carry it on successfully.—I repeat that I wish for peace as much as any man: but, rely on it, sir, that no peace can be lasting which shall be obtained by a surrender of our rights. Disgrace the nation by a disgraceful peace, and the peace cannot last, unless the nation cease to respect itself; and a nation that does not respect itself will be treated by other nations rather worse than an individual is treated by society, who does not respect himself. What will be the effect of an honorable or dishonorable peace on the two parties? The question need only to be stated and the answer is in the mouth of every man. If an honorable peace be made, and the rights we are justly contending for be pursued, the whole world will respect us—even the gentlemen themselves will respect us, for not being driven from the line of duty, by their own speeches; but if a dishonorable peace be made, and we meanly surrender the just rights of the nation, the whole world will despise us, and we ought to be put down. I will go a step farther and say, that I believe if the gentlemen who oppose the war and every measure connected with it were now in the majority, that they would not make a disgraceful peace and thereby surrender the rights we are now contending for, and that the necessary supplies would be furnished to carry the war on; nay, sir, I feel no reluctance in saying, there are men opposed to me in politics to whom I should not be unwilling to trust the present negotiation and that too without an instruction. I mean not by this to be understood as having objections to the present negotiators.—If we could by any means convince Europe, that our disputes were only of the family kind, and that any interference of hers would only more closely unite us, I believe we should never again experience much trouble from her. We ought to remember the great interest which the potentates of Europe took in the election of a king of Poland. This fact alone is enough to induce us to believe that at least Great Britain and France would be willing to meddle in our elections if they could, and no doubt they now look on them with some concern. We have had this session a subject before the house, the whole history of which I have been very anxious to know, and gave every vote I could to get it, I mean Turreau's letter; if the administration acted as it ought to have done on receiving it, I should like to know it, and if it did not so act, I should like to know it; however, let the history of this letter be what it may the letter itself proves, like one read sometime past in his place by a gentleman from N. Y. (Mr. Grosvenor) written by a man, who has been accused of more subserviency to France than any other in the nation, that there never was any French influence in the cabinet; and we have heard more noise about Turreau's letter than about all the wrongs Great Britain has done us; more than about the 150 A-

merican sailors which the gentleman from Mass. (Col. Pickens) admitted had been impressed. I must here remark that this number differs very much from every other calculation that I have seen or heard. The letter of Com. Rodgers, after examining some British documents which he found in some vessel which he had taken, supposes the number to be much greater than had ever been thought in the United States, and the secretary of State had reported the number to be more than 6000, & Lord Castlereagh has acknowledged 1600 in the British Parliament, and it cannot reasonably be supposed that he would acknowledge more than was right; on the contrary it would not be unfair to suppose that many had been impressed, of which he never heard, because they were impressed in every quarter of the world. This same letter seems to have displeased the gentlemen more than impressment or plundering on the ocean, or robbery, murder or rape at Hampton. I have now done with this letter, and having at a former session stated my opinion about foreign influence, I will not now repeat it. If, sir, there be any monarchy men in the nation, and I hope there are not, we however know there were some in the time of the revolution, and I hope they have been convinced of their error and changed their political opinions; do you not think that they would be pleased to hear arguments which we have heard about disunion & a separation of the states; would they not calculate that disunion and separation would produce disorder and confusion, & that these might provoke the people to think of a king and the restoration of Charles the second? I cannot bear to think of such a state of things; I will quit the subject. We have heard much about the rights of a minority. I hope that I understand them, and I never will knowingly violate one of them; I was politically brought up in a minority, and under the most rigid and severe majority that I have ever seen, and I never will imitate the example of those who abridged my rights when in the minority, by abridging the rights of any minority; it is not however the right of any minority to violate the laws, nor have the majority any claim on the minority except that they obey the laws; if laws should be passed which are unconstitutional or inexpedient, there are but two ways pointed out in the constitution to get clear of them, which are, the people at the elections express their opinion, and their representatives carry that opinion into effect, and the courts of law can decide on the constitutionality of a law when properly brought before them. If it were true and I am sure it is not, that the legislature and the Executive had done all the wrongs which have been charged to them, it would not, according to the constitution, justify any attempt to change the law, only as before stated. The President may be impeached, but that has nothing to do with a violation of the law by any other person. Admit that the administration has managed our own affairs as bad as has been stated, (which is not admitted,) can that give G. Britain any right or cause to impress our citizens or to plunder our property; we might complain and if we thought proper change our rulers, but it is nothing to her how our affairs are managed, nor can the improper conduct of any administration, so far as it concerns ourselves, give cause to any foreign power to violate the laws of nations against us. I however hope that the administration is able to maintain and defend our rights, provided we furnish the ways and means, but without these it cannot be done, and without them the gentlemen need not dread offensive war either on land or water, though they do not seem to have any objection to the latter, nor can their favorite system of defensive war be carried on, and we must of necessity return to the old plan of begging

and soliciting, not now as heretofore for justice, but for mercy, and we have already tried for justice about 20 years, and until neither G. Britain nor France would scarcely answer our applications; we have by persevering experience demonstrated, that a begging nation cannot maintain her rights nor prevent injustice by begging; we have also demonstrated that if G. Britain and France agreed in nothing else they agreed to do us all the injury they could. We must depend either on American valor or British magnanimity for the maintenance and support of our national rights, and I am for depending on American valor.—Lewis the 14th of France and the United Provinces have both tried begging, and both begged of G. Britain and succeeded no better than we have done, and not long since several powers in Europe tried it with France, but without success. We have been reminded of the enormous debt of England, and at the same time of her great wealth and resources. In her career of debt I wish not to follow her, nor in the cause which produced a great share of it, which was the taking part in almost every war which has happened in Modern Europe, by raising about one half to fight the other on land, that she might become mistress of the ocean. The management of the war has been brought before us: I feel no hesitation in stating it as my opinion, that the military operations in the neighborhood of lake Ontario have not been well managed, but on the lake Com. Chauncey did as much as could have been expected from any man; and it is due to his antagonist, though an enemy, to say that he was qualified to command against Chauncey. But in a country like ours, where we keep in time of peace but a small standing army, great success against trained troops ought not to be expected at the first breaking out of a war; and whenever peace shall be established, I hope to see the army reduced to the old peace establishment. When we speak of the attempt to invade Canada, we ought to recollect the Indian war carried on under the administration of General Washington, who certainly knew the merits of every revolutionary officer better than any man in the nation, and who was a complete judge of military men and affairs; yet the two first commanders which he selected were both defeated; and when the third defeated the Indians, they took shelter under a British fort and garrison, which fort had been recently built within the limits of the United States, and thus saved themselves from the pursuit of the victorious troops. We have been told again and again that the loan will not be obtained. It is probable that no man in the House knows that it certainly will; but having heard the same said last year—and the loan for that year having been made without any difficulty, and on quite as good terms as the 5,000,000 loan made under a federal administration—I hope that it will, and that the gentlemen at the next session of Congress will find themselves a second time mistaken about the loan. I feel no hesitation in stating it as my opinion, that if it be not obtained, and the reports which we have heard be true, that the people of Boston will not lend, that the cause of the failure may be traced to the enemy (the gentlemen from that part of the country will pardon the expression.) Nearly all the money in the nation, it is reported—and it has been said, I believe in the House—is travelling to Boston for goods. What produced this?—The blockading proclamation, which includes all the country from N. York to the south. If, therefore, the people of Boston will not lend, and the enemy by his proclamation causes the money of the nation to travel to Boston for goods, does it not follow that the cause of the failure may be traced to him? If this shall be the state of things, it unquestionably follows that the enemy by his proclamation regulates the loan. But if from any cause