



Our sacred plane of fair, delightful Peace, Unwar'd by party rage, to live like Brothers

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 1814.

No. 775.

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

The gentleman said, that no man believes that we can prevent Great Britain from impressing her own subjects. I do not believe that I do not believe that there is a man in the country that will ever attempt it. We have no power to do, nor never had, with her ships to do, nor never had, with her ships to do, nor never had, with her ships to do...

with not defending it. If by defending the country is intended to convey the idea, that the whole frontier of the United States North and South, East and West be so defended that no enemy could put his foot within our limits, I agree with him that it has not been so defended, and I fear never will; nay, that it is impossible. Except the military operations in the vicinity of Lake Ontario, as much was done last fall as could reasonably have been expected; but how can the Executive have men at every place where a vessel may come on our extensive sea-coast, or where an Indian may approach the frontier, unless the men be furnished him by the Legislature, and I doubt whether a million would be sufficient to enable him to so defend the country that no enemy should put his foot in it. While the war continues we may expect that small parties will lead in different parts of the nation, more with a view to plunder than any thing else; and if there should not be any troops at the place, the people of the country will run out to defend their wives, their children and their property. When invaded they will not, they cannot, and they ought not to wait for an order either from the Governor or of the State or the President of the United States to defend themselves. The gentlemen seem to speak of the protection which the Executive ought to afford, as if the Executive alone had the authority to raise both men and money, or as if the Executive was some uncommon being, which could itself see and protect every part of the nation. One day we are told that the Executive does not defend the nation, and that there is a want of energy in it. The real cause of the complaints, as I understand them, have not been mentioned. They are the British orders and the French edicts. We, however, hear nothing of them; they seem to be forgotten, while we hear it daily repeated that the country is not defended. If the country is not defended, furnish the means and it will be done; and if the means be not furnished, we must fold our arms & wait with patience until Great Britain will in her tender mercy refrain from attacking us, and grant us such a peace as may suit herself.

My colleague said that he would not give his claim on Bonaparte, and he did not appear to value that very highly for his part of the unsettled land of Canada, if it should be taken. I do not know any rule by which the value of either could be ascertained, therefore cannot say which would be a good or bargain to give one for the other. I will, however, say that I would not give the little claim which my descendants may have to our western country for all the claims on Bonaparte, although the western land may not produce the revenue which many have expected, it is certainly of great advantage to the nation in this respect, if in no other, that it enables every man who wishes it, by moving, to become a land holder on moderate terms, and to better his condition. I appeal to all who have gone to that country for the truth of the statement. In this Congress there is an extraordinary collection of young men of talents. The western country, like every other part of the nation has her share of them. Who can look at them and not be proud that he is an American? Young in years but old in experience; an honor to their parents, an ornament to their country. A friend of mine was here last winter, who had been in the habit of attending to the proceedings of Congress, expressed his surprise at seeing them, and said that he had thought, from reading their speeches, they were much older than he found them to be. It is I think in some measure owing to our happy form of government, that we have such men. It is calculated to stimulate and to make great characters, particularly great orators. The various meetings of the people, the state legislatures, and this house, and

I might add the courts of justice, are all places which have a tendency to promote public speaking. Indeed the fathers of the country seem to me, if they had nothing else in view, could not have formed a more perfect plan to encourage the rising generation to be great and to be virtuous; in this view I consider the western country a very great benefit because it gives more room for young men to try their talents; some that may not succeed from an accidental cause in one place may in another. Notwithstanding this and all the other advantages of the constitution, we have heard disunion talked of in this house, the foundation of which was laid to perpetuate the union, by the greatest man of the age. To dissolve the union and destroy the constitution, would be throwing from us as great a blessing as kind providence has bestowed on any people in modern times; it would be to acknowledge that we could not be governed by reason, and that party feuds had got the better of our best judgment and destroyed our greatest happiness.

We have heard a great deal about faction—I agree with the gentlemen that a faction, wicked and corrupt if they please, may be either a majority or a minority; and add, that I believe there have been examples of both, and that England, during the time of Cromwell, had a factious minority by whose contrivance or by his management of them, he got the command of the army, and by the army the command of the kingdom. The history of every country that ever was free informs us that faction destroyed the liberty of the people, and we have heard enough of the wickedness of faction in Revolutionary France, to admonish & persuade us to keep as clear as we can of its terrible effects. But how is a wicked and corrupt faction to be known? It is only by their doings—from their acts they must be judged, and by this rule all parties ought to be judged.

My colleague, like many others, advises us to repeal the act laying an embargo, and told us if we would that the capital of the people would be put into circulation and that it would be the means of the government getting money. He advises us by what means we may get money, though he will not vote for the bill. I thought his advice good I would follow it, but of that I have some doubts. That the capital of the country may be put into more active operation by the repeal may be true; but it does not follow that the government would get money more readily; that must depend on the demand for money here and in Europe. If the demand be greater there than here, then it will not aid the government, because money, like every other article of trade, will be sent to the market where it will bring the highest price; of course, if the demand be greater in a foreign market than at home, more will be exported than will be imported; but the embargo was not laid to enable the government to get money, but to prevent the enemy from getting a supply of provisions; and if it be repealed, the object for which it was laid will be abandoned. Repeal it and his provisions will not cost him half as much as they will with it not repealed. Repeal it and Halifax will become the receptacle of our provisions by means of neutrals or pretended neutrals, and no more complaints will be heard in the British House of Commons of the enormous expense of the armaments on the American station; but to lay it in the winter when the coast could not easily be blockaded and take it off on the approach of spring when it can, would be to act strangely indeed. That to put it on when our vessels might go out without danger, and take it off when they cannot. England herself could not be displeased at such doings; indeed it appears to me that it would exactly suit her. Again, repeal the embargo, and let Spain who is contending for her liberty, get provisions. I do

not understand that Spain is contending for liberty, certainly not as we enjoy it, but for the king that shall govern her, and so far as self government may be concerned I wish her success, and that she may have the king she prefers, be him whom he may; but the liberty of the subject is never cause of war between kings; any one of them may oppress his subjects as much as he pleases, and no brother king will quarrel with him for that alone, and as I dislike kings as much as Joshua did, I care not who any nation may have for king. I wish them however all to have the person they prefer.

My colleague also said that Great Britain could not conquer France. With the war between G. Britain and France we have noting to do; they have both treated us in a manner not to command our respect. I hope however that Great Britain cannot conquer France nor France G. Britain, nor any other nation; they are both powerful enough as they are, and both willing to have more power.—G. Britain however, has had a greater probability of conquering her.—The war between them cannot give Great Britain any right to impress American citizens, & it is to prevent their impressment that the war is now carried on by the United States.

My colleague also said there was no opposition made by the federal party for several years after Mr. Jefferson came into office. In this he is mistaken; for I well recollect the repeal of the internal taxes was as much opposed then as this bill now is: there was at that time no necessity for the taxes and on that ground they were repealed. The repeal was then called oppression by the opposition, & they also told us that it would destroy the public credit. In this as well as all the other predictions made by them at the time, they were mistaken.—When the repeal of the taxes was called oppression, the then eloquent chairman of the committee of Ways and Means replied, it was an oppression of a new kind and one that the people would not complain of; and they were then assured that taxes would be laid whenever it should be necessary, and when they were necessary, they were laid; so that the same party opposed the repeal of the taxes when they were not necessary and the money which they would bring was not wanted in the Treasury, and opposed the laying of them when they were necessary and the money wanted in the Treasury. A gain during the same period there was a debate which continued as long as this has done & was quite as violent, it was on the repeal of the act generally known by the name of the midnight judiciary act. The act by which some of the then federal members of Congress contrived to get the appointment of district judge, that was to provide for themselves while they had the power. It was on this repeal that the people were called their own worst enemies by federal members of Congress.

I am sincerely sorry that my colleague has thought it necessary in this debate to state what was done at any election in the state, or what was the democratic doctrine in that part of it, where he lived. I shall leave the ticket and illumination with him and our colleague (Mr. Yancy,) with a single observation, that the doctrine stated to be democratic was formerly published as federal by high authority; and that intolerance mentioned and supported in Congress, was by a distinguished federalist, who said in his place that the federal administration ought to turn every man out of office who did not agree with it in politics—and the advice was pretty well followed. The best and most tolerant among us is often no doubt, wrong—perfection is not the lot of man; but intolerance, whether in religion or in politics cannot always be right; argument and reason cannot be used to benefit one who is really intolerant. But, sir, truth has nothing to fear from intolerance, as we have seen; only let the liberty

of speech and the freedom of the press be as it now is, and truth will triumph. I dislike all intolerance, no matter from whom or what party it may come—it is an attempt to tyrannize over the mind. I had hoped that the state which we in part represent had been free from it, or at least from the violence of it. I cannot forbear here to remark—and I take not only pleasure but pride also in doing it—that in that state no person has been turned out of office on account of his political principles by the Republican administration. Party itself is not so very injurious in a free country—it is probably, rather an advantage; but the vindictiveness and intolerance of it, is a most serious evil, and whenever it assumes the vindictive and intolerant character, it is a certain mark that the worst men of the party are in the lead.

I come now to remark on the observations made by my colleague (Mr. Gaston.) He said that we wanted practical security for our sailors; and that impressment was a grievance too intolerable to be borne. This exactly is what we say, and it seems to me that it must forever settle the question about the justice and propriety of the war. No comment on these words could make their meaning more plain or impressive; and the government has surely made every effort before war was declared which could be the first of to obtain practical security for our sailors against British impressment, without obtaining it; and this grievance, too intolerable to be borne, must be borne or opposed by force. I once thought and so expressed myself on this floor, that it might be obtained by an appeal to her interests. But this appeal has been made, without producing the least effect—indeed, while we suffer impressment, no arrangement by which practical security for our sailors would be obtained, would suit her as well as the convenient practice of impressing them; because by it she keeps her ships well manned wherever they may be. I should have been highly gratified if my colleague, who is very capable of forming plans, had told us whether he had formed one by which practical security for our sailors could be obtained. His telling of his desire, without giving a plan by which it was to be carried into execution, was leaving us exactly where he found us—in fact, he did not even suggest a remedy for a grievance which he declared too intolerable to be borne. Every expedient, it seems to me, which the wit of man could devise, has been tried and tried in vain. I verily believe, state the question of impressment fairly to every man in the state which we are from, and that every one of them will agree with my colleague, that impressment is a grievance too intolerable to be borne. Notwithstanding he has told us five men of the name of one of his constituents had been killed, and they all had protections, this fact did not, however, convince him that impressment was not a grievance—nor could it convince any other man; admit all the 5 men were British subjects, and that protections have been bought and sold, as I believe they have, and it only proves that British sailors are not willing to be impressed to fight the battles of their own country; and Gracious God, can any thing like this give G. Britain a right to impress American citizens? And why, sir, should our sailors carry a pass when the sailors of no other nation carry one; what would be thought were we to ask Great Britain to give her sailors a pass, and we have the same right to ask it of her as she has of us; whether she has impressed one hundred & fifty six as has been stated by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Col. Pickering,) or 1600 as stated by Lord Castlereagh, or more than 6000 as reported by the Secretary of State, or more than that number as C. M. Rodgers supposes in a letter written after he had examined some British documents which he had taken, and permit me here to observe that the British minister ought