

CONGRESS.

House of Representatives.
January 24.

In committee of the whole on Mr. Madison's resolutions.

Mr. TRACY spoke as follows:

It is observable, that many gentlemen, when they rise upon this subject, apologize, for want of a clear comprehension of it; and the indefinite situation of the proposition now before the committee, and indefinite reasoning upon it, have I acknowledge afforded one strong ground of argument, in my mind, against the resolution. I think the maxim defensible, that no resolution, until its principles are clearly defined and its consequences well understood, should be adopted by a legislative body, especially on a commercial subject, since it is a given point, that commerce has generally bid defiance to legislative interference, and in event, triumphed over legislative restrictions.

The discussion of this subject, has assumed an appearance, which must be surprising to a stranger, and painful in the extreme to ourselves.

The Supreme Legislature of the United States is seriously deliberating, not upon the welfare of our citizens, but upon the relative circumstances of two European nations, and this deliberation, has not for its object, the relative benefits of their markets, to us, but which form of government is best, and most like our own, which people feel the greatest affection for us, and what measures we can adopt, which will best humble one, and exalt the other.

The primary motive of these resolutions, as acknowledged by the defenders of them, was not the increase of our agriculture, manufactures, or navigation, but to humble Great Britain, and to build up France: And although it is said our manufactures and navigation, may receive advantage, it is only mentioned, as a substitute in case of failure as to the great object, of humbling Great Britain.

The discussion in favor of these regulations, has breathed nothing but hostility and revenge against the English; and yet they put on the mild appearance of commercial regulations. Legislatures, always cautious of attempting to force trade from its own channels and habits, should certainly be peculiarly cautious when they do undertake such business, to set about it with temperance and coolness; but in this debate we are told of the inexecution of a former treaty, withholding Western Posts, insult and dominations of a haughty people; that through the agency of Great Britain, the savages are upon us on one side, and the Algerines on the other; the mind is roused by such a group of evils, and then called upon to consider a statement of duties on goods imported from foreign nations. If the subject is commercial, why not treat it upon the basis of a commercial subject, and with coolness attend to it? If it is a question of political hostility or war, a firmer tone might be adopted. When a nation is oppressed on all sides, by injuries which call loudly to be avenged, there is an imperiousness in their circumstances, which often precludes deliberation, and sometimes, at least denies its propriety; promptitude of action, in the first form that presents itself, is frequently a virtue. But when all this national pressure, is to obtain redress, from laying a duty on a few articles of commerce, one would hardly think the violent introduction, much less an impassioned mode of debate, could strike any man with propriety. I think this mode of treating the subject tends to confuse, and contains in it no aptitude to develop either principles or consequences. After making these observations, permit me, sir, to consider the question before the committee merely as a commercial one, and for a moment lay aside Indians, Algerines, and all such irritating objects. I engage it shall be for a moment, they certainly shall have a full consideration, in a future part of my argument. To perform this task, with propriety, the state of our commerce, naturally presents itself as the first object of enquiry. In this I am anticipated by the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Dexter,) and by a number of incontestible facts, contained in the official document before the committee. Our commerce is flourishing, and our navigation rapidly increasing.

I, sir, was bred a farmer, I live among farmers, much further removed from a view of commerce, than any of my colleagues, and when these resolutions were brought forward, I expected the painful detail, that our commerce was languishing and our tonnage decreasing, and that our mercantile interest was earnestly calling for the aid and protection of government. But in this expectation I am agreeably disappointed; no merchant is complaining, nor any fact existing, to justify such complaints. It is worthy of remark, and must induce serious enquiry, if our trade is deranged and shackled to the degree pretended, why the merchants in this house should be totally ignorant of it? And why, to a man, they should be opposed to these regulations which put on the specious appearance, of affording direct relief to them? This circumstance alone, would go far in my mind, towards negating the propositions, much farther than the *closet* speculations of a philosopher in their favor, which nine times in ten, cannot be reduced to practice.

And here, Sir, I feel a confidence in repeating, that upon a subject of forcing trade from one nation to another, which is of necessity so complicated in principle, so various and invisible in consequences; the committee will never act, but with the utmost caution, and will constantly keep in view, that trade will seek its own markets, find its own level and regulate itself much better than we can do; and although we may embarrass it, and injure our own citizens and even other nations for a while, it will eventually rise above all the regulations we can make.

The gentleman who introduced these resolves, aware of our flourishing state of commerce, has acknowledged that by their adoption, certain evils will be incurred.—What are these evils? If we allow full operation to his positions, without an immediate overture in Great Britain, there will be a stagnation of trade, a damp to agriculture, its labourers thrown out of employment; the present surplus of produce, must perish on the hands of the farmer, &c. &c. But these evils, he says, ought to be cheerfully borne, to obtain, in event, a much greater good.—This position is a sound one, to bear present small evils, to effect future great benefits: But to make the reasoning complete, should not the gentleman shew, that the promised good, is not only great enough to justify a trial of the present evil, but that it is certain?

Are the benefits promised by these regulations, in any measure certain, or even probable? The great benefits promised, are a treaty with Great Britain, a repeal of her navigation act, as it respects the United States, and in fact a universal freedom of trade, and if these fail, an increase of our manufactures, and a course of trade with France, free, as they please to give us.

I know Indians, &c. are talked of, but I mean, these are the promised benefits, of a commercial kind. Are those events so probable that we shall be justified, in trying an experiment at the certain expense of our present tranquillity and happiness? It is said, our citizens are virtuous, this I have the pleasure to believe, but to convince the whole mass of the people, that a system of self-denial, of any great extent in its operation, is to be borne by them, for a future benefit, you must hold up that benefit, in a more striking and certain point of view, than can be pretended in this case. They will be slow in understanding, that trade is to be made free, by imposing more and greater shackles upon it. But if our commerce is flourishing, say the gentlemen, why should it not be more so? If Great Britain imposes pointed restraints upon our trade, and is expressing her jealousy and hatred to us on every practicable occasion, why not free ourselves? What has Great Britain done, Sir? Has she made a single law, restricting the commerce of Independent America? All her restrictions that now affect us, were in existence while we were her colonies, and are part of her colonial establishment.

Her navigation act, is as old as 1660, and upon strict examination, the United States are more favored in her European, East and West India ports, than any other nation. It is said our trade was at first forced there, but this rests merely on assertion, it is not in proof before the committee.

The markets of Great Britain being the best, our articles of commerce and hers being reciprocally useful; and, a sim-

ilarity of language and religion, with many other natural causes, have carried our trade to her ports, and will keep it there, until better markets offer, or it is forced away. It is said the credit given by British merchants is an evil, and that the people of Virginia owe an immense sum in Great Britain.

When a complaint is made in direct terms of restrictions on our trade, one would not readily imagine that another complaint would be coupled with it, that the trade was so free as to become an injury: Besides credit given to an industrious provident man never can be an injury; will it place us in a situation of fear? If we may argue from a great state, Virginia, to the Union, this is not true, for although that state owes immense debts, her representatives come forward with great spirit, to bring Great Britain to her feet. This circumstance of giving credit, is entirely a municipal regulation wholly out of reach of Congress.

The people at the Eastward, do not owe the English merchants, and are very generally opposed to these regulations.—These facts must convince us, that the credits given us by the trade of Great Britain, do not operate a fear and a dependence, which can be alarming to government.

If the municipal regulations of Virginia, or any other state, will place the whole of each man's property, within the reach of his creditor, and allow the creditor legal coercion for payment of debts, when voluntary payment is denied, there will be no danger from foreign or domestic credit. The slothful and idle, as well as the spendthrift and wicked, will readily attribute to faults of omission and commission in government, those evils, necessarily connected with their own imprudence.

It is said by a gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. Findley) that the merchants in this city, who possess capitals of their own, wish these restrictions on British trade, and that the poorer sort, who are in want of credit, and must do business by obtaining it, are opposed to them.

If this be a fact, which is yet to be ascertained, it affords another argument against the resolutions. If capitalists, Nabobs in trade, would wish to shut out of competition, men who have not capitals, whose industry, and knowledge of business, if they can at first obtain credit, would promise them a living, and usefulness to community, whence is this wish derived? From nothing but a desire to effect a monopoly of trade to themselves, the consequence of which would be a profit of 25 or 50 per cent. and those men who have not capitals, must serve them as clerks or quit the country.

Liberty and equality is not the foremost feature in this desire of our rich merchants, if the desire exists; and such a doctrine favors more of *Aristocracy* and less of *Republicanism* than I expected to hear from that honorable member.

(To be Continued.)

Congress of the United States.
IN SENATE,

Friday, January 31.

The Senate resumed the second reading of the bill, sent from the House of Representatives for concurrence, entitled, "An act for completing and better supporting the military establishment of the United States"—and after debate

Resolved, That this bill do not pass.

Ordered, That the Secretary notify the House of Representatives that the Senate do not concur in this bill.

The Senate adjourned to 11 o'clock on Monday morning.

Monday, February 3.

The Senate took into consideration the message of the President of the United States of the 30th of December last, respecting certain impediments in the coinage of the precious metals, together with the report of the Secretary for the department of State thereon.

On motion,

Ordered, That Mr. Cabot, Mr. Izard and Mr. Ellsworth, be a committee to take into consideration and report, on that part of the message of the President of the United States of the 30th of December last, which respects certain impediments to the coinage of the precious metals, together with the report of the Secretary for the department of State thereon.

The Senate proceeded to the consideration of the last paragraph of the said message and the papers to which it refers, and

On motion,
Ordered, That they be committed to the committee last mentioned, to consider and report thereon to the Senate.

The Senate adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Tuesday, February 4.

A message from the House of Representatives by Mr. Beckley their clerk—

"Mr. President—The House of Representatives have passed a bill, entitled, "An act providing for the relief of such of the inhabitants of Saint Domingo, resident within the United States, as may be found in want of support," in which they desired the concurrence of the Senate. And he withdrew.

The bill was read the first time.
Ordered, That this bill pass to the second reading.

The Senate adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Wednesday, February 5.

The bill, sent from the House of Representatives for concurrence, entitled, "An act providing for the relief of such of the inhabitants of Saint Domingo, resident within the United States, as may be found in want of support"—was read the second time, and after debate, the further consideration thereof was postponed until to-morrow.

Mr. Cabot reported from the committee appointed to take into consideration the last clause of the message of the President of the United States of the 30th of December, which report was read, and after debate,

Ordered, That it lie on the table.

Agreeable to the order of the day, the Senate resumed the consideration of the motion made the 16th January last, that the doors of the Senate remain open while the Senate shall be sitting in a legislative and judicial capacity.

On motion,
Ordered, That the consideration thereof be postponed to this day fortnight.

The Senate adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Thursday, February 6.

The hon. Mr. Potts from the state of Maryland attended.

The petition of Jonathan Holton, late a lieutenant in the militia of New-Hampshire, was presented and read, stating that he was wounded in the battle of Bennington, and disabled from labor, and praying to be re-instated in the list of invalid pensioners.

Ordered, That this petition be referred to the Secretary for the department of war to consider and report thereon to the Senate.

The Senate resumed the second reading of the bill, sent from the House of Representatives for concurrence, entitled, "An act providing for the relief of such of the inhabitants of Saint Domingo, resident within the United States as may be found in want of support."

On motion,
That it be re-committed for the purpose of further enquiry—

It passed in the negative.

And after agreeing to an amendment,
Ordered, That this bill pass to the third reading.

Agreeable to the order of the day, the Senate proceeded to the consideration of the report of the committee on the last clause, of the message of the President of the United States, of the 30th of December.

On motion,

To re-commit the report, and that the committee be instructed to bring in a bill for the purposes therein mentioned.

It passed in the negative.

On motion,

It was agreed that the report of the committee be adopted.

Whereupon,

A resolution passed, as is entered at large, on the Executive records of this date.

Ordered, That the Secretary desire the concurrence of the House of Representatives in this resolution.

The Senate adjourned to 11 o'clock to-morrow morning.

PRICE OF STOCKS.
PHILADELPHIA.

6 per cents,	18/3
3 ditto,	10/3
Deferred,	11/4
U. S. Bank,	13 per cent. adv.
N. A. ditto,	20 ditto ditto.
Pennsylvania do.	7 ditto ditto.