

BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS.  
Thursday, December 8.  
REPORT OF THE BUDGET.

Mr. Hobart brought up the report of the committee of ways and means. The report was read a first time. When the resolutions were about to be read a second time.

Mr. Fox rose. He said, that he should not now enter into the detail of those resolutions, but should reserve his remarks for a future opportunity. In the mean time he would say, that they were well worth the attention of every member of the house and of the community who had ever studied the business of finance. It would appear to every impartial mind that these statements were delusive, and that other and far greater efforts must be made to put us in a situation to meet our difficulties. What he more particularly alluded to at present was, the degraded situation in which the house now stood with respect to the Executive Power. They were yesterday informed, for the first time, that a sum of 1,200,000l. had been sent into Germany by the servants of the Crown, against a positive law, and not only without the assent, but without the knowledge of Parliament. That this was done in contempt of law, and for the mere convenience of his majesty's ministers, was of itself sufficiently alarming; but it became infinitely more so, on regarding the mischievous principle which it furnished. This struck him at first, but so powerfully on re-consideration, that he regretted deeply his not dissenting from the resolutions of yesterday. He now hastened to repair his fault, and he should deem himself a traitor to the constitution, if he agreed to vote either a man or a shilling, before that house had solemnly pronounced on the conduct of ministers. They had frequently heard panegyrics on the constitution from those who were employed in destroying its vital parts. But there was one point of its excellence on which he thought that all parties must be agreed, and that if the question were asked, whether the privilege of granting pecuniary aids was vested in the Crown or in the people, the answer must uniformly be, that it was vested in the latter, and exercised through their representatives.

If unforeseen exigencies had required a larger supply than had been voted, and if ministers had fairly come forward and stated the circumstance, it was experimentally clear that they might have relied on the full confidence of Parliament. But in this case they had been guilty of a direct breach of the constitution. Enquiries had been made in the last Parliament, whether any money had been sent into Germany. The answer was in the negative; and it was coupled with an intimation, that if such a succour was deemed necessary, they would immediately assemble the Parliament. But what was now the fact? They had disposed of the money not only without convening the Parliament, but they had exported it without consulting the Parliament, *whilst it was actually sitting!*—Why had not the Minister come to Parliament, and asked their concurrence? He would argue with him on this head. He spoke the language of the constitution. The question between them was, whether that constitution should be altered in its most material part? whether the power of the purse should rest with the executive power, or with the commons of England? and whether the Minister should be allowed to establish a precedent against the constitution?

The manner in which this business had been conducted was sufficient to add much to the suspicion. Large sums were advanced, it appeared before the meeting of Parliament; but these were studiously concealed. Other payments had been made so lately as the month of November 1796. All this was done as if with an intent to show that the power resided in the servants of the crown. When the minister at length came forward, there was certainly nothing apologetic in his manner: he appeared to set his own judgment above that of Parliament, and talked of the danger of publicity in matters of this nature. To argue the first of these points would be to recur to the old question; whether an absolute was preferable to a free government? With respect to the danger of publicity, if that were admitted, it would open a door to every species of fraud, which may be committed on the most false and slightest pretences. The Parliament was not to judge either of the propriety of granting a pecuniary succour, or of the quantum to be issued; it was held sufficient for them to be informed of the transaction at the instant when the money was to be paid!

This was the first time, he proceeded to observe, that the budget had been opened before the army extraordinaries had been voted. This could not be attributed to any particularity as to the time; for it was observable, that last year the budget had been open precisely on the same day, and yet the army extraordinaries had been previously voted. These extraordinaries, which covered a part of this transaction, had been brought in but yesterday. The affair was put in a peculiar train, in order to establish the precedent, lest it should be thought that Parliament by any construction or convenience, had contributed to sanction the measure.

There were other circumstances in the proceedings of yesterday not less singular in their nature. The house was then, for the first time, informed that there was a war with Spain, tho' the intimation had been publicly given by the lord lieutenant of Ireland, tho' the notice for granting letters of marque and reprisal had appeared in the Gazette, and though every newspaper was full of the hostilities.—It was undoubtedly the prerogative of the crown to make war; but without studying to ask how far this tardy communication was to be considered as tardy, he must return, and re-demand why the king's servants had usurped the functions of parliament? The extraordinaries were granted only upon estimated services; the money was diverted from those services, and how was it to be got back? The services had been voted, and the house were now compulsorily called upon not to leave them unprovided. The vote of credit was limited, in order to show that parliament considered themselves as the only judges, not only whether the money should be advanced, but to what intent it should be applied. Then what power had the minister

for these issues? To the last parliament, obsequious as it had been, and whatever evil it had committed, he had not dared to apply. The obvious mischief to be feared from sending such a quantity of specie abroad would have probably prevented them from granting the necessary powers. What figure, then, would the present parliament cut in history, if it had begun its career by overlooking so fatal a precedent? It was probable that the minister may at length tardily come forward to ask their sanction. But would they, in the mean time, sit quietly under such an insult to them and to the constitution? For his own part, he felt the latter so strongly, that he should oppose the second reading of the resolutions, for the purpose of postponing the supply. If he was supported in this measure, he should pledge himself immediately to bring forward a motion, charging the minister with "a high crime and misdemeanor."—But if the house did not declare their marked abhorrence—if they should unexpectedly connive at such a transaction, he looked with confidence to the spirit of the people, who could not fail to express their emphatical disapprobation of such a business. The speech of the minister yesterday was, in fact, a libel on the constitution. Nothing in the writings of Paine had so direct a tendency to bring it into contempt. If he was sitting on his trial for that speech, as a jurymen, he would certainly return a verdict of "guilty" and say, that the *malus animus* to destroy the constitution was evident. Many of its blessings had been taken away, but we should therefore be more studious to preserve the remainder. The acts which prevented Englishmen from meeting had struck at vital parts. If the power of pecuniary aid was now to be taken from the commons, he must say that little more was left, and that, after all our losses of blood and treasure, this formed an addition almost incalculable to our miseries. He should vote, for the reasons which he had stated, against the second reading of the resolutions.

Mr. Pitt said, that if he were not aware how far the right honorable gentleman, who had just sat down, was habituated to the use of inflammatory expressions—if this had been the first time of his founding the alarm that the constitution was in danger, he should have felt some impression of surprise. But he recollected that that was not the first time that the gentleman made a solemn appeal from that house to the people: and that it was not the first, second, or third time that he had professed to stand "behind the last dyke of the constitution." The measures to which, in his opinion, and in that of the house, the country had owed its safety, were denounced from the same quarter, as tending to national ruin!—It was not many months since the honorable gentleman had represented those laws as subversive of the constitution, which had happily frustrated the designs of its most inveterate and dangerous enemies. Under those laws he had professed that he could not sleep for an hour; and yet he very lately had given a two months notice of a motion for their repeal.

It was singularly curious to observe the new lights which had broken in on the mind of that right honorable gentleman. In his (Mr. Pitt's) speech of yesterday, which was allowed to profess, at least, the recommendations of openness and candor, there was nothing which appeared in the first instance to produce the impression which had lately appeared.—There was nothing to disturb the serenity, or impede the calculations of an honorable gentleman (Mr. Grey) whose mind was particularly liable to irritation. The honorable gentleman were placid even after the constitution had received its death-wound, and had actually suffered the resolutions to pass by an unanimous vote; but now, what was the tendency of the speech which they had just heard? It went not to punish the ministers, if they were culpable, but to revenge their sins upon the country. The resolutions, it was to be observed, did not go to bind the house to sanction any supplies forwarded to the emperor, either as to their principle or their extent; the motion was therefore calculated to inform the enemy, when they were just informed of the unanimity and zeal of the country, that the house of commons had intercepted the supplies, and that they were determined to weaken the war, or to frustrate the negotiation.

He, for his part, would supplicate the right honorable gentleman to expedite his charge of high crimes and misdemeanors, if he would only not consider the ruin of the country as a preliminary to his charges. If ministers were censurable, why should their sins be visited on the nation? The general principle, as laid down by Mr. Fox, had often been the subject of discussion. It was even admitted, and by none more freely than himself, that the power of the purse was vested in the British commons. But the principle had never before been nakedly laid down without any exception or qualification. It was uniformly understood, that ministers, in cases of emergency, were to exercise a responsible discretion. This must ever be admitted, from the necessity of the case. Yet these exceptions, thus uniformly admitted, and even when the right honorable gentleman had himself a share in the government, were now quoted as tending to destroy the very essence of the constitution. If the language of the right honorable gentleman, in this instance, was deliberate, he could not believe it to be sincere.

He then referred to the message of his majesty, on the 8th of December 1795, and to the vote of credit which followed, "to enable his majesty's ministers to adopt such measures as the exigency of circumstances may require." The confidence thus communicated, was, in his opinion, a full justification of ministers for whatever they had done. If they had refused the succours required by Austria, and thereby prevented the emperor from rescuing his dominions, nothing certainly could be more heavy than their responsibility. The vote of credit, to enable his majesty's ministers to meet with any emergency, amounted to 2,500,000l. The aids which they had deemed themselves authorized to transmit to the emperor, passed but little beyond 1,200,000l. He, as principal agent in this affair, was ready to avow his responsibility. If he and his coadjutors were punishable, he should rather be convicted on the grounds which he had adopted, than acquitted on the proof of an opposite conduct. If the proceeding has been less justified by precedent

in his opinion it would have been more meritorious. The question now before the house was, whether it was prepared to surrender to France, by a compliance with the motion of the right honorable gentleman, every thing on which the safety of the nation depended?

Mr. Fox said a few words in explanation.—What he had said of the extraordinaries was, that if they were refused, some branch of the public service must be starved. This made it the more dangerous and blameable to resort to them, for the purpose of covering a different expenditure.

Sir W. Pulteney said, that the measure of the minister, which was now questioned, appeared to him, in the first instance, as criminal and unconstitutional. He had not slept on the business; he had on the preceding night communicated his opinion to his friends around him. If Mr. Fox had spoken too strongly on other occasions, that was no reason why he should not be attended to when there appeared a real danger. The constitution of the country appeared to him to depend on this question.—Whether the minister should be allowed to furnish large pecuniary aids without the consent of parliament?—The defence set up on this occasion he thought extremely weak. The expenditure could not be covered by the vote of extraordinaries, which included only the charges which had been previously set down in the estimate. It could not be sanctioned by a vote of credit, for no minister had ever dared to convert any part of a vote of credit to a foreign subsidy. As to the observations on the stopping the supplies, this was the usual shelter of every minister. He did not concur in the motion made by Mr. Fox; but if this plea was granted in its extent to Mr. Pitt, there was an end to the power and interference of parliament. He would freely admit, that, in case of a new emergency, ministers were entitled to a responsible discretion. He could not but remark, that the minister had made no remark to the strongest part of the allegation—that this money was remitted whilst parliament was sitting, and without making to them the smallest communication. This furnished, in his opinion, a most destructive precedent, and the conduct of the minister, on the whole, demanded the strongest censure of parliament. He had approved of his interference in the affairs of Holland in the year 1787; but what made the difference was, that at that time the parliament was not sitting. With respect to the danger of publicity, he drew a contrary inference from that of the minister. France was encouraged, when she learned that we had refused supplies to Austria. In this instance the notoriety of the transaction must have discouraged the enemy in proportion as it tended to stimulate our ally. The difference of exchange was in this view but a paltry consideration. He saw much to blame in the increase of the navy debt, and could point out many existing abuses; but in his opinion the gross infringement on the constitution should be the prime object of regard and of enquiry.

Mr. Grey said, that after the very able and constitutional speech of the honorable baronet, whose experience and independence gave weight and authority to every exercise of his discernment, he would not long detain the house from doing its duty upon the question. But the right honorable gentleman would perceive, from the questions put to him in the last parliament, that some suspicion of his present conduct then existed in the minds of his opponents. He (Mr. Grey) had then asked him whether he intended to send money to the emperor; to which no positive answer had been given. If the minister could thus dare to invade one of the essential and remaining parts of the constitution, it was time to save those parts, by declaring him guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor. His honorable friend, he hoped, would to-morrow make a motion to that effect; and if Mr. Fox did not, he (Mr. Grey) gave notice that he would. Such a declaration, he hoped, would prevent the mischief of the present offence, and the attempting of any similar ones in future. The minister had upbraided his opponents with having frequently declared that the question under discussion formed the last dyke of the constitution. It was true that they had often proclaimed their apprehensions, from violence at one time, from fraud and treachery at another; and the house were now to feel the consequence of the fervency of their predecessors, in the last parliament. If, for this offence, they did not now bring the minister to trial and punishment, there was nothing left even of the form of a constitution. The indignation of the house was already excited by the first disclosure of this offence; but what would it be when they should learn that which he had now discovered from the papers on the table, that, at the very time when the minister was talking of his openness under all difficulties, and under the excess of commercial inconveniences,—at the very time, parliament being then sitting, he had given to the emperor the greatest part of the sum, which, till within these few days, the house did not know to have been expended at all. The last parliament sat till June. It appeared, from the papers on the table, that before that time, 380,000l. out of the whole 1,200,000l. had been sent to the Emperor; in July 77,000l. was sent; and in September, October and November, 900,000l. so that, except 77,000l. the whole of this sum, disposed of without the consent of Parliament, had actually been so misapplied during the sitting of Parliament. It was even now a doubt with him, whether, if he had not pressed for those army extraordinaries, which were so lately laid upon the table, the house would yet have been informed of this misapplication; and it was difficult to shew, by any other supposition than that of an interest to deceive, how the navy debt, which was always the last back, should have been made up so early, while the army extraordinaries, which were always hitherto amongst the early papers, should have this year been so long delayed. The argument of the honorable gentleman, that exact accounts of expenditure were not required by the constitution, because extraordinaries were permitted, was founded upon the exception rather than the rule. If this was granted, no thing remained to be withheld. Extraordinaries, tho' always evils, were sometimes necessary; but was the allowance for evils to be argued upon as a beneficial rule? How loudly had the right hon.

gentleman himself, when a reformer, a friend to liberty, and an economist, inveighed against any tolerance of extraordinaries? How confidently had he put into the mouth of his majesty a recommendation to that house to guard against them! Now with respect to the vote of credit, had that a retrospective or a prospective effect? The latter only was in the view of Parliament. Yet of this expenditure, which was pretended to be justified by the vote of credit, no less than 150,000l. was sent to Col. Craufurd in December 1795; and 150,000l. was disposed of in December 1795; upon the authority of a vote of credit for the services of 1796. But the honorable gentleman had affected to justify himself by saying, that though 1,200,000l. made a conspicuous item in army extraordinaries, it was all within the limits of the vote of credit, according to which argument, the whole vote of credit might have been applied to the use of the Emperor. Mr. Grey hoped that nothing further was necessary to win the attention of the house to this flagrant breach of the constitution. No attack was ever so direct as this upon every thing that could render the life of man dear to him, liberty and the security of property. It might be said, that during a moment of negotiation, ministers were not to be fettered by that house. But would it injure us in the eyes of Europe, or humble us in those of France to shew an House of Commons jealous of its own rights, and therefore likely to be long revered, and long cherished by the country.—Now that the French were admitted by the Minister to be capable of the relations of peace and amity, and to have "snorted away the fumes of the indigested blood of their Sovereign," it might be especially useful to exhibit the proud spectacle of a free people negotiating with a free people, ourselves as jealous of our rights as they can be of theirs. The delay of one day could not injure the negotiation; and that the present question might be discussed before the supplies were granted, he would move an amendment for inserting in the resolution instead of the word "now" that of "to-morrow," on which day the house would also be moved to declare, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in disposing of the public money without the consent of parliament, had been guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor. [To be concluded in our next.]

A GEORGE WASHINGTON,  
PRESIDENT DES ETATS UNIS.  
Le 22 Février, 1797, l'Anniversaire de sa Naissance.  
ILLUSTRE WASHINGTON, qui du jong Britannique,  
Et de tous les tyrans délivras l'Amérique;  
Toi dont le bras s'arma pour sa patrie,  
Et dont le bras est l'immortalité;  
C'est toi qu'en ce beau jour si digne de mémoire,  
Je chante, et dont j'annonce à L'Univers la gloire.  
Profond dans le Conseil, ferme dans le danger,  
Au bien de ton pays tu fis tout diriger;  
Et tel que ce Romain, au cri de ta patrie,  
On te vit de tes champs quitter l'heureuse vie,  
Et des plus hauts honneurs, acquis à tes exploits,  
On te voit retourner à tes paisibles toits.  
Pour la Posterité quel exemple sublime!  
O mortel vertueux! o guerrier magnanime!  
Dans ta douce retraite, où te suivent tes vœux,  
Je demande au ciel pour toi des jours heureux!  
Qu'à l'ombre des lauriers qu'ont cueillis tes vaillans,  
N'oublie de ses dons tes dernières joies.

James Brown,  
At No. 119 South Second Street,  
HAS just received per the brig Peggy, capt. Hardy,  
from Amsterdam, a small inventory of D U T C H  
G O O D S, consisting of  
Tickenburgs  
Flaxen linen Oznaburgs  
Coffee-Mills, No. 6 to 4  
Saw knives  
Scythes 10 hands long—and  
Glafs tumblers assorted  
Which he will sell on good terms by the package.  
Also on hand,  
A few Quarter-casks Malaga WINE, and  
500 Gallons Spirits Turpentine.  
February 23

WYOMING LANDS.  
THE Pennsylvania claimants of Lands, held  
by titles which commenced before the decree of  
TRENTON in December 1782, are requested to  
meet at M'SHANE'S Tavern, in Third Street, on  
Friday Evening, February 24th, at 6 o'clock, on  
urgent business.  
February 21

Lately Imported;  
AND now opening for Sale, by the Box or single ream,  
by B. DAVIES, at No. 68 Market-street, an assortment  
of ENGLISH PAPER,  
—CONSISTING OF—  
Printing Paper, of an excellent quality, both Medium  
and Demy  
Writing Ditto, of various sizes and qualities, as  
Imperial Thick and thin folio cut, &c.  
Super-Royal Post, for  
Royal Foolscap, common offices.  
Medium, common Ditto wove  
Ditto wove for drawing  
Demy, common Thick and thin, 4to, post, plain  
Ditto, wove 8th and black-edged  
Demy and 4to, 16 marble paper

A general assortment of the neatest Stationary  
Ware, a variety of maps, charts and plans, and  
a valuable collection of BOOKS in the English, French,  
Greek and Latin languages. As he intends to decline the  
Book-trade, he proposes to dispose of his stock of Books  
on hand at reduced prices, for cash or approved notes: cat-  
alogues of the books may be had at the same place.  
February 23

This day is published,  
By William Cobbet, in three large octavo volumes,  
A Defence of the Constitutions of Govern-  
ment of the United States of America,  
Against the attack of M. Turgot, in his letter to Dr.  
Price, dated the twenty second day of March, 1778.  
By JOHN ADAMS, L. L. D.  
President of the United States.  
Embellished with a striking Likeness of the author,  
elegantly engraved by Smither—from an original portrait  
by Copley.  
February 23—53

For Charleston and Savannah,  
THE SCHOONER  
LYDIA,  
Oliver Jenkins, Master,  
WILL take freight on moderate terms, and be ready to  
take in a few days. Apply to  
JOSEPH ANTHONY & Co.  
February 23