



CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.
SATURDAY Dec. 11.

(Debate concluded from our 'ast.)

Mr. Seney said he could not conceive what ground of apprehension there was in the address, to lead gentlemen to suppose that the opinion of the house would be committed by its adoption—He thought it couched in the most general and unexceptionable terms: The amendment proposed, he did not think vary'd essentially from the paragraph under consideration—but as the original was well expressed, he saw no reason for expunging the clause—it contained an assertion, the truth of which he supposed would not be controverted. As to the objection against going into a detail of particulars, it was fully justified by precedent in the last address—the gentleman from South Carolina, if his memory served him, was on the committee who framed it—that address more pointedly committed the house than the present.

Mr. Madison thought proper to take some notice of the objections that had been made to the report. There were two modes of proceeding, he said, that might be adopted in drawing up the answer. The first method was generally to declare, that the House would take into their serious consideration the business recommended to their attention by the President: And this, he observed, would be saying nothing, for as by the constitution it was the President's duty to communicate what matters he judged of importance; so it was undoubtedly that of the house to pay attention to the objects recommended. The second method was, to enter into a detail of the different points mentioned in the President's address, and in such cases where there was no doubt as to the propriety of measures being taken, assure him in the answer, that measures would be adopted; and if any thing doubtful occurred, merely promise that the subject should be attended to. This rule the committee had followed in drawing up their report, and as in the business mentioned in the paragraph now before the house, they did not hesitate to believe some measures necessary, they could see no impropriety in assuring him that the best would be adopted. He added, that as it is clear that a war in Europe would by depriving us of foreign bottoms to export our produce, injure this country; and as wars were doubtful, it was of the utmost importance that the American navy be put on so respectable a footing as not to need foreign aid for the exportation of her produce. He further observed, that the answer returned last session, was more full, and went even to give the President assurances that the house would concur in certain points proposed for their consideration in his address. He concluded by remarking, that the amendment proposed was binding on the House quite as much as the paragraph in the report.

Mr. Smith said it was true those who reported the address the last session, adverted to particulars, but were cautious in their mode of expression, and adopted ambiguous language to avoid giving an opinion: This would appear by recurring to that address: The charge of inconsistency on his part, was therefore not well founded. Mr. Smith read some paragraphs of that address, and observed, that the house was not pledged by the expressions then read; but in the present address, there is an opinion given: It says that we ought not to depend on foreign bottoms, because in case of war we may be deprived of that resource. These declarations originate the objections, and gave rise to the proposed amendment. He proposed therefore, as gentlemen appear to have no objection to either mode of expression, that they would accommodate for the sake of harmony and unanimity.

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 15, 1790.

IT should have been mentioned in our last that Mr. Ransfellaer took his seat on Tuesday.

A petition from A. E. Luterloh was presented by Mr. Bloodworth, which was read and laid on the table.

Mr. Lawrance presented the petition of Timothy Mix—referred to the Secretary at War.

Mr. Fitzsimons presented the petition of Thomas Randall—read and referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.—Also the petition of John Linn, —referred to the Secretary at War.

The motion laid on the table by Mr. Smith, respecting the Eulogium on Dr. Franklin, was called for by that gentleman and passed.

Mr. Ames presented the petition of Josiah Simpson, in behalf of sundry persons who had performed services as blacksmiths, for which they have not received due compensation—read and referred to the Secretary at War.

Mr. Gerry presented the petitions of Reuben Gold and Amos Davis.—referred to the Secretary at War.

Mr. Burke presented the memorial of which was read and referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Mr. Jackson moved that leave be given to bring in a bill to continue an act, declaring the assent of Congress to certain acts of the State of Rhode Island, Maryland and Georgia, which will expire the 10th day of January next.

A Committee was accordingly appointed consisting of Messrs. Jackson, Ames and Stuges.

On motion of Mr. Smith, (S. C.) the House resolved itself into a committee of the whole, (Mr. Livermore in the chair) and took into consideration the speech of the President of the United States, to both Houses of Congress. The speech was read by the Clerk—after which Mr. Smith (S. C.) recapitulated the several subjects specially suggested to the consideration of the House, by the speech; he distinguished such parts of the speech as were already in train, by being referred the last session to heads of departments, and others which have been referred to committees; and then moved a resolution with a blank to be filled up with such articles as are not already particularly provided for, by being referred or committed.

Mr. Boudinot was in favor of chusing a committee to confer with the Senate on the mode of taking up the several parts of the speech.

Mr. Vining was in favor of Mr. Smith's motion.

Mr. Lawrance said that it appeared to him that the usual mode of considering the speech, would be the best; he therefore thought it proper that it should be taken up in paragraphs—and where it appeared that particular parts were already disposed of, to let them be passed over; and with respect to others, committees might be appointed, as the committee of the whole may determine.

Mr. Clymer supposed, that agreeable to the determination of the House last session, the whole business should be taken up *de novo*.

The Chairman observed that as the whole speech was now before the Committee, it remained to proceed to the discussion of the several parts—pursuant to which he should read it paragraph by paragraph, and the committee would determine respecting them, as they saw proper—this appeared to him to be the natural way of doing the business.

Mr. Vining said the difficulty appeared to originate in the mode—for his part, he thought the least circumlocutory the best, and for that reason had seconded the motion by the gentleman from South Carolina.

The motion of Mr. Smith lay on the table—and the Chairman proceeded to read the speech in paragraphs.—On reading the paragraph respecting the Indian expedition, Mr. Smith moved that the article should be inserted in the blank in his motion.

Mr. Lawrance supposed it best to pass over this article.

Mr. Vining concurred in the sentiment with Mr. Lawrance.

Mr. Hartley was opposed to passing this matter over—the prospect that further hostilities would take place between the inhabitants of the frontiers and the Indians rendered it highly necessary that something should be done immediately.

Mr. Seney said he had no idea that any gentleman in the committee had it in view to pass over this business entirely—still he thought it impossible to determine at once what is proper to be done on every subject—The mode proposed by the gentleman from South Carolina, appeared to him calculated to commit the judgment of the House.

Mr. Lee observed, that as the committee as such, had no right to appoint a committee of any kind, he thought that any thing further than expressing the sense of the committee on the several parts of the speech, would be improper; with this view he submitted a resolution to the following effect, on the paragraph respecting Indian affairs, viz. Resolved, that it is the opinion of the committee that the present posture of Indian affairs, requires the serious attention of the legislature. This was seconded by Mr. Seney.

Mr. Smith objected to this motion as it did not bring the object fully before the committee: If the gentleman would consent that it should go so far as to propose the appointment of a select committee, he should have no objection to it.

Mr. Lee supported his motion.

Mr. Lawrance observed that it appeared to him that nothing more was necessary to be done in this business, than providing the means of defraying the expence—he had supposed it would strike the committee in this point of light—The expediency or inexpediency of the expedition he presumed was not now to be discussed—The President does not appeal to the house to determine the propriety of his conduct—The expedition has been approved of by the house in their answer to the President's speech—He therefore moved the following, Resolved, as the sense of this committee that immediate provision ought to be made to defray the expences of the expedition against the Indians, N. W. of the Ohio.

Mr. Lee withdrew his motion—and that of Mr. Lawrance being put was agreed to.

The paragraph respecting our navigation being read, Mr. Goodhue observed, that the reason af-

signed by the gentleman from S. Carolina, for passing over that part of the President's speech, that which subject was connected with the fisheries on which a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, was expected, did not appear sufficient to him to justify their passing it over—He therefore moved the following, Resolved, as the sense of this committee, that a committee ought to be appointed to bring in a bill for the further encouragement of the navigation of the United States.

Mr. Smith, observed that he thought the subject was referred to the Secretary of State—He read a paragraph from the speech to shew it was connected with the fisheries. He wished for a suspension of the business, as the exact state of affairs in Europe was at present unknown.

Mr. Fitzsimons said that the reasons offered were sufficient to prevent a sudden decision—but did not in his opinion render it improper to take up the subject immediately—He should be opposed to an ultimate decision till the fullest information is obtained.

Mr. Vining entered into a general consideration of the subject; he thought the present the critical moment in which this interesting business should be discussed on its own proper principles; he thought the proposed resolution did not enter fully enough into the merits of the subject, agreeable to the ideas suggested by the President; he therefore proposed a resolution which went to express the sentiments of the house respecting making provision for the transportation of American produce, in American bottoms.

Mr. Goodhue objected to the motion of Mr. Vining at the present moment, though he fully accorded with him in principle, he thought the motion he had submitted would more generally meet the present ideas of the committee.

Mr. Jackson opposed Mr. Vining's motion; he said though he was against taking any measures at present, he preferred the resolution of the gentleman from Salem.

Mr. Vining withdrew his motion. Mr. Goodhue's motion being put, passed in the affirmative.

The paragraph respecting the Mediterranean trade being read—Mr. Smith moved the following. Resolved, that such part of the President's speech as relates to the trade to the Mediterranean, be referred to the Secretary of State; agreed to.

On the subjects of weights and measures, Mr. Vining moved the following. Resolved, as the sense of this committee, that a committee ought to be appointed to bring in a bill or bills providing for the establishment of a uniform standard of weights and measures throughout the United States.

Mr. Boudinot suggested the propriety of passing over this business at present; he mentioned a reason offered by the Secretary of State, that there was to be a convention in Europe on this particular business; the result of the meeting is not yet known.

Mr. Lawrance proposed that as the report of the Secretary of the Treasury had not been acted upon, that it should now be referred to a committee of the whole house.

Mr. Vining observed that if that report was to be discussed by the house, they must divest themselves of the character of politicians and assume that of philosophers; the discussion he conceived would employ the committee till next March, 12 months. He thought the mode he proposed would be found more simple, and the committee appointed would naturally avail themselves of the Secretary's report.

Mr. (S. C.) was in favor of taking up the Secretary's report in committee of the whole.

Several members spoke against Mr. Vining's motion, which being put, was lost.

The discussion being gone through, the committee rose and reported the resolutions they had agreed to—which being read, are as follows: Resolved, as the opinion of this committee, that immediate provision be made to defray the expences of the expedition against the Indians, North West of the Ohio; this resolution was agreed to, and referred to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Resolved, as the sense of this committee, that a committee ought to be appointed to bring in a bill or bills making further provision for the encouragement of the navigation of the United States; agreed to by the house, and referred to a committee of twelve.

Resolved, that such parts of the President's speech as refers to the Mediterranean trade, be referred to the Secretary of State.

On motion of Mr. Boudinot it was resolved, that the report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the subject of the unappropriated lands—and the instituting a land office, be referred to a committee of the whole house on Friday next.

Ordered, That one hundred copies be printed for the use of the house.

On motion of Mr. Smith, (S. C.) the report of the Secretary of State on the subject of Weights and Measures, was referred to the committee of the whole house on Wednesday next.

Adjourned.