



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.  
MONDAY, Jan. 24.

The house resumed the consideration of the amendments proposed to the new REVENUE BILL.

MR. TUCKER proposed a clause to limit the duration of the bill: He urged this motion from the consideration of the security it would afford to the people, that the duties and burthens would not be continued after the necessity of their being laid should cease: He observed that a future house might agree to renew the law, or to originate a new one—nor did he conceive that the creditors of the United States would be placed in a worse situation with this limitation than without it; for a house that would refuse to renew the act, or originate a new one, on a principle of justice to the creditors, would not hesitate to repeal this law.

Mr. Sherman observed, that a clause already agreed to, supercedes the necessity of this amendment: That clause expressly provides, that other duties or taxes, of equal value, may be substituted, in case the present should prove burthenome or inconvenient.

Mr. Jackson supported the motion: He observed that it was the indispensable duty of this house to keep the purse strings in their hands—for his part he never would consent to a perpetual law, which in its operations might prove odious to the people—and he maintained that this law would be perpetual, inasmuch as it was to be commensurate with the debt of the United States—he urged the adoption of a limiting clause from a variety of considerations.

Mr. Lawrance objected to the motion: He said it not only interfered with the acts already passed, making provision for the public debt, and which have express reference to part of the duties contemplated by this bill; but it also contravenes the clause which makes it optional with the United States, to substitute other taxes in lieu of those proposed to be raised by this bill.

Mr. Gerry objected to the proposition of Mr. Tucker, on similar principles with Mr. Lawrance: He added, that it would prove a violation of the public faith, inasmuch as it would make part of the provision temporary, whereas the honor of the government is pledged to provide those funds that are permanent. Mr. Gerry enlarged on the importance and sacredness of the public faith—it has been sufficiently trifled with—he hoped more consistency would mark the public councils in future.

Mr. Giles said he thought the provision proposed, or something similar, so important, that he should think himself deficient in duty if he did not offer some observations on it. He denied the motion violated the funding system; but if it did, he should prefer such violation to a violation of the constitution. He read a clause from the funding system, and said the terms "permanent funds" meant established, fixed funds, such as Congress may hereafter deem necessary; it cannot mean that Congress are not at liberty to vary these funds at pleasure, provided they are but always made competent. Will gentlemen say that the system is so sacred that it can never be touched? He enquired, if in its operation any system is found to be contrary to the constitution, ought it to be held sacred? He then adverted to the impression under which the constitution had been adopted, and said that if the people had then supposed that they subjected themselves by it to perpetual burthens, which could never be controuled by the representatives of the people, not one in a hundred would ever have consented to its adoption. He asked, on what is the public faith founded? Is it founded on the fiscal regulations of this house? Is it founded on the funding system? I hope not: It is founded, sir, on the integrity of the United States, and their ability to pay their debts. He was afraid there was too great a sympathy with the public creditors in the house—such a sympathy as did not properly combine with it the interests and feelings of the people at a distance. He considered the power of regulating the resources of the United States, as at present situated, properly lodged—and he trusted it would not be delegated to any other body whatever. I hope, said he, we shall not arm the executive with the golden nerve of the United States. He considered the executive as possessing all the necessary powers—he wished they might not be extended—much less could he consent that the funding system should be superior to the constitution of the United States.

Mr. Lawrance adverting to the constitution, specified the powers thereby vested in the legislature of the United States, they are empowered to lay excises, imposts and other taxes. He wished gentlemen would be explicit when they taxed others with a design to violate the constitution—he had read the constitution, perhaps not so much as the gentleman from Virginia, still he had read it sufficient to convince him that nothing in the funding system, nor in the bill now before the house, was contrary thereto. He then adverted to the proposition of limiting the present bill, and said that it must appear to be a palpable violation of the public faith as pledged by the funding system; it goes to converting not only the present fund into a temporary one, but also converts part of that which is now a permanent fund into a temporary. He then adverted to the observation which tended to affix a stigma of odium on the bill; he remarked on the subject of taxes generally, and said there never was such a thing as a popular tax, strictly speaking—still the people submitted to them on principles of patriotism, and when it was said that the people are pleased with any particular mode of taxation, it only means that some are less exceptionable than others; this he conceived to be the case in the present instance.

Mr. Jackson adverting to the bill said, that the clause which empowers Congress to substitute new taxes in lieu of the excise, plainly shews that this bill is not a permanent bill—the proposition is therefore no violation of any principle in the bill, it is merely declaratory of what is fairly implied in the above clause.

Mr. Heister was in favor of the limitation.

Mr. Bloodworth said he had seconded the motion with a view that if the bill should not prove agreeable to the people, other measures may be adopted. Suppose the people should not consent to the law, is one part of the people to be marched against another? It will be in vain for us to pass a law that shall be opposed to the popular prejudices; gentlemen talk of the bill's being agreeable to the people—his experience taught him very differently; no system could be devised more odious to the people of the Southern States.

Mr. Gerry further opposed the motion.

Mr. Tucker rose to obviate some of the objections which had been offered to his motion—if the operation of it went to repeal any part of the funding law, he was content to have it altered so as to avoid that consequence. He then entered into a particular reply, to the several objections which had been offered: He invalidated that which arose from the danger of trusting a future Congress, by instancing the situation of the deferred part of the debt which is left entirely to the integrity of a future Congress; that the public creditors do not consider the perpetuity of the law making provision for the public debt as of any superior consequence, is evident from the increasing value of the deferred debt.

Mr. Stone said the motion would counteract the clause in the funding system which had appropriated the duty on rum as a permanent fund; he had been opposed to the United States pledging their faith for the payment of their debts, he was for a more dignified mode of procedure, but as the legislature had thought proper to provide a permanent fund in one instance, he thought it proper they should do it in another—and with respect to excise, if that is the best possible resource for paying the interest on the assumed debt, it ought to be continued on the same principle till the object is obtained.

Mr. Sherman offered a few observations against the motion.

Mr. Seney spoke in its favor, and proposed a modification of it to avoid the objection of its interfering with the funding system.

The question was taken on the original motion and lost, 39 to 19.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 9.

Mr. Huntington, from the committee appointed for that purpose reported a bill, for encreasing the penalties contained in an act for the encouragement of learning, which was read a first time.

A message was received from the President of the United States, by Mr. Lear his secretary, notifying that he has this day approved and signed an act which originated in this house, entitled an act declaring the consent of Congress to a certain act of the state of Maryland; also communicating sundry papers relative to the admission of the territory of Vermont as a member of the federal union, which were read and referred to a select committee, of three members, Messrs. Lawrance, Boudinot and Carroll.

Mr. Sedgwick from the committee appointed for that purpose, reported a bill to continue in force for a limited time the act regulating processes in the federal courts; which was read the first time.

Mr. Gerry presented the the petition of Michael Jackson, late a colonel in the Massachusetts line of the army, praying to be placed on the pension list, in consideration of disability occasioned by public service, which was read and referred to the Secretary at War.

Mr. Bourne gave notice of the following motion, that a committee be appointed to prepare and bring in a bill, repealing so much of the act laying impost and tonnage, as rates the rix dollar of Denmark, at 100 cents, which motion was laid on the table.

On motion of Mr. Smith (S. C.) a committee of three was appointed to prepare and bring in a bill supplementary to an act for incorporating the subscribers to the Bank of the United States, Mr. Smith [S. C.] Williamson and Mr. Stone are the said committee.

Mr. Boudinot gave notice, that to-morrow he should move, that a committee be appointed to bring in a bill supplementary to an act for establishing the treasury department.

After which the galleries were cleared.

THURSDAY, Feb. 10.

The bill to ascertain the time for the commencement of the next session of Congress, was brought in engrossed, read a third time, and laid on the table.

The bill to encrease the penalties contained in an act, entitled, an act for the encouragement of learning, was read a second time, and referred to a committee of the whole house on Monday next.

The bill to continue the act, regulating processes in the courts of the United States, was read a second time, and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

Mr. Huntington presented the petition of John Fitch, remonstrating against certain parts of the bill, to amend the act, entitled, an act to promote the progress of useful arts, which was read and laid on the table.

Mr. Smith, (S. C.) presented the following petition, which was read and laid on the table.

To the Hon. The REPRESENTATIVES of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,

The petition of the subscribers, Masters of American vessels, in the port of Charleston, South-Carolina, intended for the carrying trade to Europe, humbly sheweth,

THAT allured by the encouragement afforded by Congress in a former session, to the shipping of the United States of America, the owners of the vessels, commanded by your petitioners, were induced to engage their capitals in the carrying trade, from the southern States to Europe; in pursuance of this plan they have greatly multiplied their shipping, by building new vessels; and others have been taken from the West-India and other branches of trade, in which for some years past, they have been engaged with very indifferent success; the aggregate constitutes a prodigious navigation, of which we are concerned to add, that the port of Charleston at the present moment affords a melancholy proof.

During the last season a very considerable number of American vessels were loaded at this port; but their freights were in general the least acceptable, and at lower rates than were at the same time obtained by foreign vessels: This preference could not be attributed to any inferiority in the American shipping; but to some circumstances that are incomprehensible to your petitioners; but which they trust the wisdom of Congress will ascertain.

In the present instance, your petitioners find themselves in this port, with shipping nearly adequate to the transportation of the whole crop of this country; and they beg leave to observe, that the season not yet being far advanced, many more vessels may reasonably be expected—and more than thirty are actually known to be coming. Thus situated, the majority of your petitioners find themselves destitute of employment; the influx of foreigners having been as great, or greater than ever—and the usual partiality in their favor still existing; many of us foresee the necessity of returning to our respective ports of equipment, or employment, almost as unpromising as remaining in port. But previous to departing, we conceive it a duty we owe to our country, as well as to ourselves, to represent our situation to the supreme Legislature of the Union.

In the fullest confidence that our petition will be favorably received, and its object be thought to merit the consideration of Congress; we have subscribed our names, our respective vessels, and their tonnage—and as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

Signed by the Masters of	24 Ships,	} Tonnage, 8118.
	16 Brigs,	
	1 Schooner,	

Charleston, South-Carolina, Jan. 19, 1791.

Mr. Boudinot's motion of yesterday was taken up, and a committee consisting of Mr. Boudinot, Mr. Fitzsimons, and Mr. Ames, was appointed to prepare and bring in a bill, supplementary to the act, establishing the Treasury Department.

On motion, a committee, consisting of Mr. Bourne, Mr. Sherman, and Mr. Thatcher, was appointed to consider and report what alteration may be proper in the act, imposing duties on imports and tonnage, in respect to the rix dollar of Denmark, rated therein at 100 cents.

The house then resolved itself into a committee of the whole, Mr. Boudinot in the chair, and took into consideration the bill authorizing the President of the United States to cause the debt due to foreign officers to be paid and discharged: The bill being gone through with, the committee rose and reported the same without any amendment. The bill was agreed to by the house, and ordered to be engrossed for a third reading.

The house again resolved itself into a committee of the whole, Mr. Boudinot in the chair, and took into consideration the bill establishing offices for granting lands within the territory of the United States. The committee agreed to sundry amendments—then rose, reported progress, and asked leave to sit again.

Mr. Smith, from the committee appointed for that purpose, reported a bill supplementary to