For the National Intelligencer.

HISTORY
OF THE
LAST SESSION OF CONGRESS.

[CONTINUED.]

On the 16th of January, the Houſe of Repreſentatives paſſed an act to continue in force the act, laying duties on licences for ſelling wine and foreign diſtilled ſpirits by retail, on property ſold at auction, and on carriages.

Previouſly to the paſſage of this act a motion was made to limit its duration to two years; under the idea that the taxes raiſed by it were of ſuch a nature, that their continuance ſhould depend upon the fiſcal circumſtances of the country, of which circumſtances the repreſentatives of the people would in all future periods be the beſt judges, whom it became to retain in their own hands the power over all taxes not pledged to ſpecific and permanent objects; the beſt way of effecting which would be to paſs revenue laws for ſhort periods.

On the other hand it was declared that the ſources of taxation opened by this bill were ſuch as ought permanently to be uſed to ſupply the demands of the treaſury; and that to paſs revenue laws for ſhort periods had a tendency to depreſs the credit of our financial arrangements, as it placed their ſtability, not on the united will of the legiſlature, but on the momentary impulſe which might actuate a ſingle branch. The motion to limit the duration of the act was loſt by a majority of ſix.

On the 21ſt of January the H. of R. took in conſideration the report of a ſelect committee recommending the continuance of the *Sedition Law.*

A debate of great length enſued, which was not terminated till the third day.

In this debate the continuance of the law was ſupported by Meſſrs Platt, Griſwold, Dana, Rutledge, Harper, Bayard, Otis, H. Lee, and Dennis; and oppoſed by Meſſrs Davis, Randolph, Nicholas, Huger, Claiborne, Gallatin, Nicholas, Macon, and Lyon.

On the queſtion being taken the houſe being divided, the Speaker's caſting vote was given for the continuance of the law.

The debate on this occaſion, though protracted to an unuſual length, was deſultory and unintereſting. The important points, as well of conſtitutionality as of expediency had, in previous debates, been ſo fully and ably diſcuſſed, that this debate ſhed little new light on the ſubject. On the one hand, the conduct of the federal judiciary was condemned as partial and oppreſſive, and particularly the conduct of judge Chaſe; while on the other, it was not only juſtified, but applauded as impartial and enlightened.

The moſt prominent advocates of the meaſure were Mr. Bayard, and Mr. Harper; the former of theſe gentlemen, in diſcuſſing the conſtitutionality of the act, pronounced a ſpirited eulogium on the common law, which he affirmed to be the grand palladium of our liberties; without which our ſyſtem of government as well as of juſtice would be nerveleſs and unintelligible.

Mr. Harper avowed his attachment to the bill as the ſhield of free enquiry. He ſaid that hitherto on principle he had been the friend of the adminiſtration; he hoped ſtill to continue its friend. But if, as might be the caſe, an unprincipled faction ſhould attempt a grand ſyſtem of ſubverſion, which ſhould tend to impair our ſtrength, deſtroy our rights, and trample upon our property, he might be compelled to raiſe his voice againſt their meaſures; in which event, he ſhould fly to this very law as his bulwark againſt perſecution. By it the truth was permitted to be given in evidence. However flagitious the conduct of rulers might be, if he could prove the truth of his charges, he would eſcape the penalties attached to malicious and wilful untruths.

Theſe ideas were repelled in a ſtrain of cool and dignified eloquence. The opponents of the then, and the friends of the enſuing adminiſtration, declared their abhorrence of the principle as well as the execution of the law. As it had ſprang from a ſtate of alarm, it was their wiſh that with the exiſtence of that alarm it might expire. They denied the application to the United States of the monſtrous maſs of error mixed with truth, called the common law. They challenged any man to define what the common law, as applied to the U. S. was, or to what extent its limits went, and where they ſtopped. For themſelves they diſclaimed all the protection which it was alleged this act gave to government againſt calumny and abuſe. They knew that if the government acted with wiſdom and integrity, it would be ſupported by the affections of the people; and they were convinced that if it wandered into error and vice, it merited that cenſure which they truſted it would always receive. They acknowledged the perverſe propenſity of ſome minds to traduce the wiſeſt and the beſt actions; but they knew the impotency of ſuch malice, and that ſedition laws, which repreſſed truth, were not the inſtruments of ſilencing falſehoods.

The caſting vote of the Speaker was of but ſmall avail. In the progreſs of the meaſure, it received on the 21ſt of Feb. its death blow, by a vote of 49 for and 53 againſt the paſſage of the bill.

Thus expired an act (as has been pointedly remarked with the adminiſtration that gave it birth) which has done more to deface the beneficent ſpirit of our legal code, than all the other unauthoriſed meaſures which a ſtate of ſincere or affected alarm has called into exiſtence. It ſtruck at the vital principle of a republic, and placed at the mercy of vindictive power every man who dared to queſtion with freedom the motives of public men, or the tendency of public meaſures.

On the 19th of January, purſuant to order, the committee of commerce and manufactures reported a bill to incorporate certain perſons (being thoſe engaged in working Schuyler's mines in New-Jerſey) as a mine and metal company. On the 29th of January the bill was taken into conſideration, and a motion thereupon made to ſtrike out the firſt ſection, on the principle that congreſs were not authorized by the conſtitution to grant charters of incorporation. This motion, ſupported by Meſſrs. Livingſton and Bird, and oppoſed by Meſſrs. S. Smith, Rutledge, J. Brown, and Bayard, was rejected; and the bill, after undergoing ſeveral amendments, paſſed the houſe by a majority of ſix; not, however, being agreed to by the Senate, it fell through.

On the 27th of January Mr. Gregg propoſed an alteration of the naturalization law in ſuch a way as to admit to citizenſhip aliens who were reſident within the United States prior to the 29th of January 1795. The motion, after receiving amendment, was referred to a ſelect committee, who either omitted to report, or whoſe report, if made, proved abortive.

On the 28th of January a bill was reported to the houſe of repreſentatives by a committee conſiſting of 7 federal members, "for the government of the diſtrict of Columbia." The bill directed that—

I. A legiſlature ſhall be eſtabliſhed, to conſiſt of a Senate and Houſe of Repreſentatives.

II. The diſtrict ſhall be divided into two precincts, one on the weſt, the other on the eaſt ſide of the Potomack.

III. *The House of Representatives* ſhall conſiſt of fourteen members, ſeven reſident in the Eaſtern, and ſeven in the Weſtern precinct, choſen for two years, by citizens of the U. S. reſident 12 months in the diſtrict and 1 month in the precinct of the United States, who are freeholders.

The qualifications of a member of the Houſe of Repreſentatives are, being 25 years of age, being a citizen of the United States, reſident in the diſtrict for 12 months, and in the precinct for 1 month, and being a freeholder therein.

IV. The *Senate* ſhall conſiſt of ſix members, three reſident in the Eaſtern, and three in the Weſtern precinct, choſen for ſix years.

The qualifications of a Senator are being thirty years of age, being a citizen of the United States, reſident in the diſtrict for twelve months, and in the precinct for one month, and being a freeholder therein.

The Senators are to be choſen by eight electors, four whereof to be elected by the citizens of the Eaſtern, and four by the citizens of the Weſtern precinct, which electors ſhall have the ſame qualifications as members of the Houſe of Repreſentatives, and who ſhall be elected by the ſame citizens who vote for members of the Houſe of Repreſentatives.

The Senate to be divided, at the organiſation, into three claſſes, one of which is to be replaced every ſecond year.

V. A Governor ſhall be appointed by the Preſident of the United States for three years, unleſs ſooner removed.

He ſhall appoint all officers erected by the legiſlature of the diſtrict.

He ſhall have a veto upon the paſſage of all laws; and if after his diſapproving a law, it ſhall be repaſſed by two thirds of each houſe, he ſhall lay the law before Congreſs to be acted upon by them.

VI. Taxes, excepting exciſes, impoſts and tonnage duties, may be layed by the legiſlature; but no law ſhall be paſſed for taxing the diſtrict for opening, paving repairing, improving, lighting or regulating the ſtreets, in any town or city within the diſtrict.

VII. Two ſheriffs ſhall be appointed annually by the governor, one for the Eaſtern and one for the Weſtern precinct, who beſides the ordinary duties of ſheriffs, ſhall hold and be judges of all elections.

VIII. The judicial power of the diſtrict ſhall be veſted in two ſuperior, and two inferior courts, the judges to be appointed by the Preſident, to be paid by the United States, and to hold their offices during good behaviour.

IX. The legiſlature may paſs all laws needful for the government and police of the diſtrict, repealeable or alterable by Congreſs, who may make any law, which ſhall be ſupreme.

X. A governor ſhall be immediately appointed.

Such are the features of a bill, perhaps the moſt extraordinary that the annals either of federal or ſtate legiſlation preſent ſince the era of American Independence. Under the ſpecious maſk of imitating the conſtitution of the United States, it ſubverted the pillar of that inſtrument by limiting the right of ſuffrage, and of being elected to office, to citizens poſſeſſed of a freehold property. It placed at the mercy of the executive magiſtrate, himſelf to be appointed by the preſident, the lives and property of the citizens, by giving to him the uncontrolled appointment of ſheriffs. It imparted to the legiſlative body a continuance in office calculated to exalt it above all impoſſibility.

It will not be ſurpriſing that ſuch a bill received the vigorous oppoſition, in every ſtage, of the republican ſide of the houſe; but it is ſurpriſing that its moſt pernicious proviſions ſhould receive the zealous ſupport of a majority of the Houſe, which demonſtrates the extreme length to which party ſpirit, united with power, will go, even to the ſacrifice of the vital principles of liberty.

Notwithſtanding the decided and perſevering oppoſition given to this meaſure, it ſeemed likely to ſurvive it, when the Senate agreed to a bill, which they ſent to the houſe, paſſed on different principles and from different motives. This bill avoided the organization of a legiſlature, but preſcribed the eſtabliſhment of a court conſiſting of three judges to be appointed by the preſident, and of a board of juſtices of the peace, to whom the right of taxation and police was confided.

To this ſyſtem, the federal ſide of the houſe was compelled, in deſpair of obtaining any other, reluctantly to ſubmit, and it paſſed into a law.

On the 10th of February the committee of commerce and manufactures reported a bill to continue in force for another year the act ſuſpending commercial intercourſe between the United States and France, which expired by its own limitation at the end of the ſeſſion.

A motion was immediately made to reject the bill; on which an animated debate enſued, in which the motion to reject was ſupported by Meſſrs. Randolph, S. Smith, Nicholas, Gallatin, Macon, Livingſton, Davis, H. Lee and Eggleſton, and oppoſed by Meſſrs. Harper, Rutledge, Otis, Waln, C. Goodrich, Dennis, and J. C. Thomas.

It was ſaid by thoſe who voted and advocated the immediate rejection of the bill, that the propoſition of it at this time, when a treaty of amity with France had been concluded, and the faireſt proſpect of reconciliation preſented itſelf, was an inſult not only to the houſe, but to the whole American people. Such a meaſure, taken at ſuch a time, muſt be conſidered as deſigned to fruſtrate all accommodation. It ſpoke that language, which had heretofore been too intemperately ſpoken; it ſpoke the language of irreconcileable enmity—of war.

The advocates of the bill declared that they were guided by reaſons which they were not aſhamed to avow. They wiſhed to convince France that the productions of our country were uſeful to her, and that we would rather let them rot in our ports, than expoſe ſuch weakneſs as to make her believe that we muſt at all events bring them to market. We had taken our ground; we had determined upon defence and ſacrifice to preſerve our national honor, and except the moſt unequivocal proofs were given of the removal of the cauſes, we would not depart from thoſe meaſures, which had proved ſo ſalutary. One article of the treaty with France had been rejected, and if France choſe, ſhe might diſagree to the whole treaty ſo altered. Until it was finally ratified, it became the United States to maintain its old ground.

The queſtion was then taken, and the bill rejected by a majority of eighteen votes.

To be sold to the highest bidder, at Montgomery Court-house Maryland, on Monday the 6th April next, and terms made known on said day.

THE following Tracts of Land adjoining, well adapted to farming and planting with a ſufficiency of wood land, in a beautiful and healthy part of the Country, 4 miles from the above named Court Houſe, and 18 from the City of Waſhington. One called Barnhill containing 205 1-2 Acres, on which is a framed dwelling houſe 24 by 16 feet, with two brick chimneys, a Barn 60 by 24 feet, ſhingled roof, & Shedded all round a Kitchen and other convenient houſes—Apple and Peach Orchards 10 or 12 Acres of Meadow, is well ſet with Timothy, and more can be made. The other Wickhams goodeville, containing 271 1-2 Acres, on which is a Framed Dwelling Houſe, 20 by 16 feet, Kitchen, ſtone milk Houſe 12 feet ſquare—Tobacco and other houſes, 12 or 15 Acres of Meadow well ſet in Timothy, and 70 Acres more can be made. A never failing ſtream runs through ſaid land, ſo that the meadows may be watered with eaſe.

Alſo on the firſt day of May next, will be offered at Mr. Tunnicliff's Tavern; one, the moſt Weſterly of the Old Six buildings in the City of Waſhington, now occupied by Mr. John Coyle.

HONORE MARTIN.

Montgomery County, 17th March, 1801. } tM

IN CHANCERY,

April 2d, 1801.

EDWARD MOORE, an inſolvent debtor of Calvert county, makes application as a trader, by petition to the Chancellor in writing, praying the benefit of "an act for the relief of ſundry inſolvent debtors," there is annexed to his petition a ſchedule of his property, and a liſt of his creditors on oath, as by the ſaid act is required; and the Chancellor being ſatisfied by competent teſtimony, that the ſaid Edward Moore is, and at the time of paſſing the ſaid act was a citizen of this ſtate and of the United States—

It is hereupon adjudged and ordered, that he appear before the Chancellor, in the Chancery office, on the third day of November next, for the purpoſe of taking the oath by the ſaid act required, in preſence of his creditors; and that by cauſing a copy of this order to be inſerted three times during the preſent month, in one of the newſpapers of the city of Waſhington, and by ſerving perſonal notice on James A. Magruder, he give notice to his creditors to attend on the ſaid third day of November next, for the purpoſe of recommending a truſtee for their benefit; and to lodge with the Chancellor within ſix months from the time of the laſt publication (if they ſhall think fit) their diſſent to his being admitted to the benefit of the ſaid act.

Teſt, *SAMUEL H. HOWARD,*
Reg. Cur. Can.
3t

Ten Dollars Reward.

RAN away, a negro boy, named DICK, about nineteen years of age, about five feet ſix or ſeven inches high, ſlender built, has a large ſcar on one cheek of a burn, which reaches up over his eye ſo as to disfigure the eye a little, of a yellowiſh complexion, not to be a mulatto; he had on a pair of blue cloth pantaloons, a ſailor jacket of blue, a large wool hat about half worn, a good pair of ſhoes, and took with him a leather apron, he has belonged to Mr. Richardſon Stuart of Baltimore, five or ſix years paſt, and worked in his ſhop at making nails, which buſineſs he is tolerable well acquainted with. He left me between Alexandria and George-Town. I expect he will endeavour to get to Baltimore to his mother. Any perſon ſecuring him, ſo that either Charles Rogers of George Town, Richardſon Stuart, or Archibald Shaw, of Baltimore; or me the ſubſcriber in Wilks county, North-Carolina, ſhall receive the above reward.

ANDREW ERWIN.

April 20. 6t

Conrad & M'Munn

HAVE opened houſes of entertainment in the range of buildings formerly occupied by Mr. Law, about two hundred paces from the Capitol, in New Jerſey avenue, leading from thence to the Eaſtern Branch. They are ſpacious and convenient, one of which is deſigned for ſtage paſſengers and travellers, the other for the accommodation of boarders. There is ſtablage ſufficient for 60 horſes—They hope to merit public patronage.

City of Waſhington, Nov. 24, 1800. tf

A PREMIUM of 100 dollars will be given to any Perſon who will exhibit the beſt Plan of BARRACKS, for the Marines, ſufficient to hold 500 men, with their officers, and of a Houſe for the commandant. The Plan muſt be ſo drawn as to be capable of being hereafter enlarged, and muſt be ſo arranged as to ſuit the dimenſions of the Lot, which has an Eaſt and Weſt front of 615 feet, and a North and South front of 250—The plans muſt be all lodged at the Navy Office before 1ſt May.

April 3, 1801.

Public Sale of LOTS,

IN WASHINGTON CITY.

WILL be Sold at Public Auction, to the higheſt bidder, on Friday the 1ſt day of May next, at William Tunnicliff's Hotel. Two Hundred Lots, ſituated Eaſtward of the Capitol and near to the Eaſtern Branch Ferry— The terms will be one half Caſh and the other half at 90 days on Notes negotiable at the Bank of Columbia ſatisfactorily endorſed. An indiſputable title will be given by,

GEORGE WALKER.

Waſhington, March 2, 1801. tMay1