The National Intelligencer,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

VOL. I. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, NEW-JERSEY AVENUE, NEAR THE CAPITOL. No. LXXXIII.

FIVE DOLLS. PER ANN. WEDNESDAY, MAY 13th, 1801. PAID IN ADVANCE.

LONDON, March 25.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Debate on Mr. Grey's motion, to wit, "that the House do resolve itself into a Committee to enquire into the state of the nation."

[*Continued.*

MR. PITT'S SPEECH.

"Sir, I cannot be indifferent in the discussion of this subject, recollecting as I do with gratitude and exultation, the confidence which in common with implicit and honourable friends, I have experienced as a faithful servant of the crown, nor can I with any confidency pretend to indifference, when I remember the anxiety of personal confidence I have enjoyed. Unless gentlemen are fully prepared to retract all the votes which they have given—such they are completely convinced of the necessity of changing their opinions, so repeatedly and so solemnly pledged, with regard to the nature of the contest—unless they are in every respect satisfied that it is not, what they have all along considered it to be, a contest for our independence as a nation with our enemies abroad, and for our internal safety and confidence as a people with our enemies at home, the honour and consistency of the house shall be violated by agreeing to the motion of the Honourable Gentleman. It will be a future consideration for the house and the country at large to decide whether those persons who have from the commencement to the present period approved the war on the principles of the enemy; whether those persons who have proceeded upon the plan recognized by our adversaries themselves; whether those who have by their arguments promoted their views, and by effort counteracted your exertions during the whole of the struggle in which we are engaged, are worthy of directing the system of public affairs, and of possessing the confidence of the country. If the moment shall ever come when, by treading back those steps in which you have hitherto marched, you are to avoid a final portion of the calamities which threaten you;—if that moment shall arrive when the house shall listen to those counsels which they have uniformly rejected, then will I think there is some cause for despondency.—[A general cry of *hear! hear!*] When the counsels of those persons shall be referred to as oracles, and the honour and security of the state, then shall I feel much reason for banishing the hopes I now entertain of our successes and triumphs. Those who are friends to the administration, and at the same time concur in the vote which you are called upon to give, cannot, fairly convince the house of the consistency of their conduct, in first approved all the important cases of the conduct of that administration, they now come forward and press an inquiry into the causes which induced them to support the measures they condemned. I perceive according to the manner in which the question is proposed, two sets of gentlemen are requisited to vote upon principles directly opposite. One set are called upon to vote—because the late administration is out of office; and the other, because they are adverse to the new ministers. There is no explicit charge of treasons, crimes and misdemeanors; there is no precise accusation brought forward; no specific fact mentioned; but these gentlemen are to take the benefit of the doubt while I shall only have the benefit of a speech. The honourable gentleman opposite to me says, here is an administration gone out of office who had the confidence of the house, and yet the complaint is not that the persons are out of office who had the confidence of the house, but that you are deprived of their service for some cause which the honourable gentlemen wish to know, and which cannot be explained. At the same time, while it is admitted and made the subject of complaint, that those persons are no longer employed, and it is known that those who succeed them profess the same principles, yet they are not to enjoy the confidence given to their predecessors. If the exercise of the Royal Prerogative should appoint new Ministers, might not the same objection be made against them upon the ground of their not being tried, as against the present administration? I should like to know, and to have the point satisfactorily made out upon wha grounds in a fair and constitutional way, we are to deny to them that trial to which they have an undoubted right, and which I, as well as the honourable gentleman opposite me, have enjoyed? But, on the contrary, I maintain Sir, that they are not unknown to the country and that they are not, what they have been called, new ministers. Some of them in particular were subjected of investigation; one who knew how to conciliate all parties; one who has evinced talents of the moll distinguished kind, with what propriety, I ask Sir, can you refuse to try him? With what confidency can the Hon. gentleman opposite to me undertake to say, "because you have "quitted a station superior to all others "in this house, because you have displayed powers which graced that high station, and because you have accepted an office of great trust without any fe- "licitation on your part, we are now "for to refuse the confidence which you "have a right to claim?" If I turn my eyes to the bench below me, I see another offence of irreliable kind, to the confidence of the house. I see a Noble Lord filling the office of Secretary of State who has been ten years in Parliament, whose information, industry, and strong powers of mind are undoubted, and I may add, whose abilities are hereditary. If any gentleman can be named more qualified than the Noble Lord to perform the duties of his office, I confess to admit that he is new and untried. I certainly except the Hon. Gentleman on the other side of the house, whose extraordinary talents make his exception in every thing that requires uncommon powers, and the exertion of superior faculties.

If the hon. gentleman can state any person more qualified for the situation which he fills than my noble friend, I shall then give up the question; but I beg leave to say, that in the observations I have made I mean invidiously to no man. It is necessary for me to mention those who at present hold the great offices of the state? I believe any notice or eulogium of mine, with respect to the administration in the law department will not be requisite. In the man who is to hold the Great Seal unknown and new to the country? Yet there is none of whom I shall take the liberty of speaking a word. I must in common with all who hear me give to the noble Lord who presided at the Admiralty that approbation and praise to which his eminent services are entitled; but I must also ask, is the name of St. Vincent new to the public? Are the professional merits and the active services in which he has been constantly employed, not in account? His name alone is sufficient to inspire the enemy with terror, and is a shield and bulwark. I therefore maintain that the honourable gentleman and those who have presented against ministers, when they assert they are incapable or untried men.

Having said thus much as to the general view of the subject, may I be permitted to say a few words of personal relation to me and my colleagues? I must confess, Sir, that I am at a loss to understand what is exactly meant by the mystery which has been the topic of animadversion. The hon. gentleman was pleased to allow that a conscientious feeling is a sufficient reason for declining offices of importance held under the crown, and I may add, that no man can withdraw his services at a moment when they are particularly wanted, unless that conscientious feeling do exist, and is applicable to considerations of great magnitude. I have for my own part lived in every active manner for seventeen years during which I have of course had a very considerable share in the direction of public affairs, and I do not hesitate to say, I now feel that I have retired to a private station, as much inclined and ready to challenge and indulge enquiry, as when I was in office, and enjoyed the confidence of this house. In all the interests which have been agitated, and the responsibility which must be found, I feel that I have a deeper share than any other person, and I do not shrink from any discussion either into the motives or effects during my official station under the crown. But I shall observe that I have not relinquished that situation from the apprehension of difficulties, or the fear of dangers and embarrassments which might be thrown out in the way of the public service. Respecting a melancholy event, and my conduct upon that occasion, in which I was certainly very deeply interested, I have to state that I feel myself ready to challenge enquiry, and to meet the question of responsibility. With respect to the importance of the measures alluded to by the hon. gentleman, I mean to the Catholics, though I may be supported in my sentiments by the gentleman opposite to me, I am not convinced that I shall have their perfect concurrence. It is not the time to agitate the question, and whatever measures may be thought just and necessary to be brought forward by myself and friends, I beg leave to be distinctly understood, that we desire to disclaim the phrase of Catholic emancipation. We entertain no such meaning; but I think that extending to them the benefits of the remaining rights and privileges, would be a measure rendered particularly wise and salutary after the great act of the Union; that in every point of view it would be less dangerous than before that Union, and would be accompanied with more safety to the interests of the church and state. More than this I will not say, and beyond it will not go. With respect to the nature of the measure, even thus much would not have been drawn from me, if the house had agreed to go into the committee on the state of the nation; for it does not perfect the power of compelling an answer from me or any individual upon any principle which can be set up in consequence of such a proceeding. The discussion of the question will not force this country, nor the Catholics, nor the Catholics, nor can the committee throw any light upon it, and as little will its enquiries tend to lay open the obstacles and difficulties which prevented us from bringing it forward. When the hon. gentleman speaks of a mystery, they are pleased to draw the name of the sovereign into the question, and to state the cause of silence that we should make it a matter of consideration whether it is proper that name should be introduced. Thus they use the opinion of the sovereign in one way and the conviction of his servants in another. If they deny to the sovereign the right of having and expressing an opinion, they are guilty of conduct which goes in the most material manner to deprive the constitutional privileges of monarchial power, and they will content to the establishment of the oligarchical system. If any measure should be of a greater kind in which the royal opinion is to be defended, it is the present confederation.

With respect to the affurances said to have been given to the catholics, a paper has been mentioned which has been the subject of much conversation, as the name of a noble lord at the head of the government, and I should be sorry to introduce, I believe that the noble lord did not see that paper, for the purpose of making certain communications to the catholics of Ireland in consequence of the resignation of ministers, and in order to prevent expectation of a feeling that might be likely to disturb the tranquillity of the country. It may be necessary to state, that the subject of the paper was not communicated through me, but through my noble friend near me; and it cannot become the subtance of a charge, because we published our intentions that we might prevent any unfortunate disappointments which were likely to arise. The affurances said in that paper were not conformable to the opinions I have expressed in the house. I mean, that a measure of this kind appeared to be so great, as to require the sanction and support of government, and that although we defined to carry it into effect, yet we thought that any attempt to press the question forward, so as to endanger the public tranquility would be altogether unjustifiable. Upon these grounds, it was our determination to refrain from an attempt in such friendly and persevearance as we should otherwise have come forward in its defence, and left the consideration and adoption of it to a more fit opportunity and a more natural direction. As to any other pledge, I declare that none has been given which can disfable me from acting as my public duty requires and individual characters—I am allowed to trouble the house so long.—(A cry of *hear!*) If the question be put to me whether gentlemen did fo pledge themselves to the catholics, and prejudged the decision of the legislature as to render consistency impossible, I answer no; and I can state that the catholics never conceived that any such pledge had been given. They certainly must have expected the accomplishment of the measures, as the consequence of the union, and they might have been justified in thinking that it had a more probable chance of success than the result of an act which tended to reconcile opinions of the most different nature. Such were the sentiments I entertained before the union, and such are the sentiments with which I contemplate the union, to be improved; but I desire to be distinctly understood, that no pledge of the kind alluded has been given. I shall say no more upon this subject, but the general plan of the war. That the object of the contest was the restablishment of royalty in France, I do not attempt to deny; for, united and accomplished, would have necessarily referred tranquillity to Europe; but I never yet stated that its establishment was the *sine qua non* of peace. I may class the objects of the war under three different heads. The first was the restoration of royalty, and consequently the restoration of peace; the next, was the security of internal tranquillity and the suppression of destructive and unrelenting principles; and the third was, the preservation of the national independence and prosperity. If we have failed in one of these objects we have most failed in one of the capital conditions which have carrying contributes, while those states which did act in union with the many protection which we afforded to their wants and prayers, became the victims of the common enemy. We have not left in the midst of all the dreadful convulsions which have devastated Europe, a single foot of territory, and we have given to the rest of the world many chances of filtration. Upon this one single point of the state of the finances, as a charge has been thrown out that it has been a war of unexampled profusion. If on this head any fresh information is wanted, I am ready to lay it bfore all those who are ready to meet it. I can, however, say, that I have stated the merit of rendering the system more than on any occasion, even when the funds required for provide for the exigencies of the public service, did not amount to one tenth of the present disbursements. That consideration, however, wants no comment, as the state of the country. It is a fair comparison made between the expences of the present war and that which preceded it, and it is confidered at the same time that if it was our wish to carry on the war, which by regular means and with accustomed methods, and that the present is with a country which takes its rank in the council, which, unable to support the warfare with ordinary regular revenue, is compelled to make an inroad upon its stock, and diminish the very source of revenue; and it will be found that the sacrifices which have been conducted with unexampled economy and frugality.

That an universal pressure has been produced, bearing upon all orders of the people, cannot be denied; but the fact of economical expenditure during the present war, must at the same time be admitted. I will not to go deeply into the subject, but