NATIONAL INTELLIGNCR,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

Vol. II WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE. *No. CLXXVI.*

Five Dolls. per ann. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18th, 1801. *Paid In Advance.*

FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

We your fellow citizens, having taken into consideration numerous arguments that have occurred to the most enlightened politicians of this state, for another removal of the Seat of Government to, and in favor of the town of   in   , do with the frankness of Republicans (scorning prefatory professions of reserve and respect) submit the same to Congress in perfect confidence, that they will prove sufficiently ingenious to meet general if not universal approbation.

1st. Although you are now surmounting the inconveniences of removing to a new place, and would soon be comfortably settled, yet you would shew magnanimity by encountering them again, merely for the sake of change.

2d. Although the first Congress of the United States deemed Philadelphia not sufficiently central, and therefore selected the present district of Columbia with the name of Washington for the City, to which government repaired after ten years confirmation, in 1800, yet you would signify a proper idea of independence by annulling their former resolutions and subverting the plan of our almost forgotten General and President, in favor of a spot even less advantageous in every respect, than any heretofore.

3d. Although much more than a million of dollars have been expended on the Capitol, the President's House, and the public offices, and houses have been rented or bought by Ambassadors, Secretaries and other officers of government; and it would cost a repetition of the same to remove, yet by a second expenditure you would shew a spirited disregard of pitiful œconomy.

4th. Although private individuals have vested large Capitals, in Houses, Wharves, and other improvements; and many of them are foreigners, invited to Columbia by laws enacted or confirmed by Congress, yet you would evince a dignified rejection of exploded doctrines of public faith, and would have an opportunity by a removal even for the worse, of rejecting their supplications for redress, with imperious disdain; or of paying a few millions of dollars as a mark of liberality.

5th. Although the rapid increase of the southern states was in contemplation, and the facility of intercourse with them assigned as a reason for fixing the seat of government more in the centre, and as these circumstances have now actually occurred, you ought to display your superiority by despising such paltry considerations.

6th. Although it is believed that the French have obtained the cession of Louisiana from Spain, and a watchful eye ought, as some say, to be kept upon them, and a ready communication formed with the metropolis and our western territory, yet you will act nobly by signifying your contempt of Gallic neighbours, or wisely by removing to a greater distance.

7th. Although antiquated statesmen have extolled the policy of permanent measures, yet you ought to adopt alterations, if even prejudicial, that you may subvert old maxims, and unfold to an admiring world, the incalculable fluctuations of our republic.

8th. As predictions of numerous changes have been promulgated throughout the United States under the present administration, it would be injurious to make false prophets amongst us as in old times, and it would be improper to disappoint the modern fashionable ardor for novelty, particularly as Europe is now at peace, and the minds, tongues and pens of the world might be unoccupied, without some occurence improbable and most strange.

Some plain sense politicians may attribute our motive to self-interest, but enlightened genius which penetrates into obscurity, preferring the *latent* to the *obvious*, will adopt the result of distant research and profound discovery, and corroborate what we have disclosed by arguments equally novel of its own fertile invention. The spot we have designated, and the reasoning we have suggested might not have occurred to common understandings for centuries. We therefore, as patriots and philosophers, unrestrained by diffidence, now prudently discarded as *mauvaise honte*, will not disgrace our subject by apologies for unsolicited and unprecedented intrusion.

Antonio Revolutionaire,
Ephraim Antipode,
John Speculator,
Tobias Selfish,
Timothy Versatile,
Philip Prejuge,
Uriah Strangeway,
Thomas Dashall,
William Versatile,
George Hazard,
Robert Brazen,
Richard Avarice,
Jeremiah Fraudful,
Charles Specious,
David Cunning,
Joshua Mutable,
Lawrence Centrifuge.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,

House of Representatives.

December 15, 1801.

In committee of the whole, on the State of the Union, *Mr. Morris* in the chair.

The following resolution under consideration:

Resolved, That it is expedient that the President be authorised by law, further and more effectually to protect the commerce of the United States against the Barbary powers.

Mr. Nicholson said that when this resolution was yesterday laid on the table, he had moved for reasons that he had assigned, to strike out the words "further and more." He was, on reflection more and more persuaded of the accuracy of his objections to the unqualified terms of the original motion. If we adopt it, we pledge ourselves to increase the naval force at present at the disposition of the President. But if his modification were agreed to, every gentleman would remain at liberty to put his own construction on the words "effectual force". Uninformed as we were as to the necessity of increasing the force, it would be highly improper to commit ourselves by any precipitate decision. He, therefore, moved to strike out the words "further and more."

Mr. Giles opposed the striking out the words, which, in his opinion, did not relate to the quantum of force placed under executive disposition, but to the measures proper to be taken by the Executive. He should vote for the motion unamended, though he had been, and still was as averse as any gentleman in that house to an improper augmentation of the army or navy. With respect to the Navy, he was friendly to it as it now stood, or to an augmentation of it to meet any particular emergence.

Mr. S. Smith said that, as he understood the resolution, it went not to pledge any man to augment the Navy, but to authorise the President with the present force to take measures for the defence of our trade. We were at war with Tripoli. Against that power, therefore, the President felt himself at liberty to act efficiently. But gentlemen should advert to our situation with regard to Algiers and Tunis. Those powers may become hostile. They may become so in the recess of Congress. It may be necessary without delay to protect our trade against them. Will you then confine the President, in relation to these powers, to a peace establishment? Certainly when these circumstances were duly weighed, no gentleman will refuse the power which this resolution is intended to confer.

Mr. Smilie was in favor of the amendment for one reason. He was ready at all times to grant commerce every necessary protection. But by adopting this resolution we pledge ourselves, without enquiring into the necessity, to extend further protection. No doubt, further protection will be required. But he thought it premature to make any pledge until all the documents connected with the subject were before the house.

Dr. Mitchell suggested the propriety of amending the original resolution by inserting after the word "law" "if necessary". This would render the resolution conditional. To the resolution he was a friend. For when the aspect and extent of the United States were considered, it must be evident to every man that we were a commercial people. The bulk and extensiveness of our produce required vessels to carry it to foreign countries. The carriage required protection. The government must of course give this protection. With respect to the Mediterranean expedition no plan under the government had been better devised; and he had no hesitation to say that if the Mediterranean trade required further protection, he would be for making further appropriations of the public monies.

Mr. Nicholson said he could not agree to the suggestion of the gentleman from New-York, as by adopting it we should do nothing. How does the matter now stand? Congress has put into the hands of the President six frigates, which he had used for the public service in the Mediterranean. This was not a fit time to express his opinion on the propriety of the measures of the Executive. But when a fit occasion did offer, he would have no hesitation to say the President had done right.

To return to the point, the President has now six frigates. If we agree to the resolution, do we not pledge ourselves to increase this force?

One squadron had been sent to the Mediterranean; another was in preparation to go there, he understood. This was all right. But there followed no necessity from these circumstances, to pledge ourselves to increase the force.

We were not even acquainted with the sentiments of the President on this point. His communications did not inform us that he desired a larger force. If he did desire it, he would say so. He had, on the contrary, recommended a reduction of the army and navy; and to desire an augmentation of the latter, would be, in the same breath, to say one thing and another.

Dr. Eustis.—The President, in his communications, has informed us that he has hitherto acted on the defensive.—The simple question now is, whether he shall be empowered to take offensive steps. This has no relation, therefore, to an increase of the force, nor shall we by adopting it, pledge ourselves to such effect.

Mr. Giles was happy that the discussion was one more of words, than of principles. He perfectly coincided with the gentleman from Maryland, who had moved the amendment, in his general sentiments. It would be wrong in this house prematurely to pledge itself for an increase of naval force. But the words of the resolution do not relate to the quantum of force, but entirely to the measures to be taken with any force. When the President is authorized further and more effectually to protect our trade, it was not said, that we will give him 4 or 6 additional frigates; but merely that he is to have means, more or less, which shall be adequate to make offensive operations against those who shall make offensive operations against us.

It was well understood that he was for keeping the navy within proper bounds; but if ever there was a case where it was required this was the case; and he acknowledged that he was for empowering the President to authorize not merely a dismantlement of a vessel, but her capture.

Mr. S. Smith said it was true that six frigates had been given to the President; but it was also true that, when given, they were contemplated chiefly as a nursery for our seamen, in which view they were directed to be only too-thirds manned. Would gentlemen contend that it was fit they should go out in this inefficient state. By the prescriptions of the law, the President deemed himself bound. Already the whole number of seamen authorized by law are employed on board of four frigates; and for the want of hands the second squadron cannot be fitted out. The time of the first would expire in one year from their departure. It was therefore absolutely necessary that there should be more seamen.

The question was then taken on Mr. Nicholson's amendment, and lost.

When the original motion of Gen. Smith was carried.

The following motion, made by Gen. S. Smith, was then taken up, viz.

Resolved, That so much of the several acts imposing duties on the tonnage of ships and vessels, and on goods, wares and merchandise, imported into the United States, as imposes a discriminating duty of tonnage between foreign vessels and vessels of the United States, and between goods imported into the United States in foreign vessels and vessels of the United States, ought to be repealed; such repeal to take effect whenever the President shall be informed that the discriminating duties of foreign nations, so far as they operate to the disadvantage of the commerce of the United States, shall have been abolished.

Mr. Griswold hoped the gentleman who had made the motion before the committee, would assign the grounds on which it was made. The acts imposing discriminating duties had long existed, with great and good effect to our commercial interests. He wished to know what effects would flow from a revocation of those restrictions, and whether the proposed measure would not operate to the prejudice of the United States. In its effects the eastern states would be particularly interested, and the more especially at this period, when from the consequences likely to ensue from peace, our ships may be thrown out of employment.

Mr. S. Smith assured the gentleman from Connecticut that if the measure he proposed had, in his opinion, the least tendency to injure the commerce of the country, he should not have advocated it, as well from a regard to the deep stake he himself held, as from a regard to the interests of his constituents. The system of discriminating duties was a wise one in the early existence of the government; our own shipping was then unequal to the carrying of our produce. The discrimination operated as a charm in producing a rapid extension of shipping beyond the most sanguine expectation.

Our trade remained in this situation until the formation of the British treaty. By that instrument Great-Britain was permitted to lay coutervailing duties, and these had been so imposed as, in time of peace, to destroy the advantages attached to our shipping over theirs. The effects of this regulation were not immediately felt by us. England was at war, and her freights were charged with war insurance, while ours were exempt from such charges. Under these circumstances English bottoms could not enter into competition with American, as the war insurances of the former exceeded the inconveniences imposed on the latter.

But peace being now restored, British ships will have such an advantage over our ships, that no man will ship tobacco, rice, or any other bulky articles in American bottoms.

The effect of the countervailing duties of England would be, that an American ship carrying tobacco to England would pay 18 shillings sterling more on the hogshead than a British ship. The usual freight of a hogshead was 35 shillings. The difference therefore constituted more than one half.

Our situation was still worse in relation to France. Of the restrictive acts of that government he could not give a precise idea; but he was enabled to state, from a conversation had with a gentleman from that country high in office, that so decided a preference was given to her own over foreign bottoms, that a duty of 10 livres upon every 100 weight of tobacco was laid on the latter, which was equivalent to 120 livres on a hogshead. He further understood that 6 per cent. difference was imposed upon all other articles. Peace being now restored, French vessels will enter our ports, and become the carriers to France of all our productions.

How were these effects, so alarming to our trade, to be met? He replied that it was by taking off our discriminating duties; and by placing our merchants on equal terms with the merchants of other nations.

And, Sir, said Mr. Smith, have we not enterprize, have we not capital to hold an honorable, a succesful competition with the whole world? No man that knows the character of an American merchant will doubt his ability to sustain such a competition. The discriminating duties, once useful, have ceased to be so. Our shipping has increased, and we now want more to enter into the ports of other nations, than that other nations should enter into ours. We are willing to free trade from its trammels. Let the trade be taken by those who can carry the cheapest. As a merchant he was convinced that we could carry cheaper than any other nation. Our materials for ship-building were at hand, were cheaper, and we could navigate our ships with fewer seamen than any other nation.

The crisis required that we should take efficient measures. Unless such measures be taken our commercial rivals will seize the sweets offered by the present opportunity. It was true that in two years the British treaty would expire. But he understood that the British ministry demurred to the construction which considered that part of the treaty under which countervailing duties were imposed as expiring at that time.

Mr. Griswold declared himself not satisfied with the explanation made by the gentleman from Maryland. It was certainly desirable to secure the carrying of our bulky articles in our own ships; and if the resolution would have this effect, he should be decidedly for it. But he could not discern such to be the effect. With regard to England, it was true that tobacco was there charged with a heavy duty; but it was well known that England consumed but a small portion of what was sent there; the rest was exported; and a drawback of all duties allowed. As to the great mass of this article, therefore, it was not charged any more than it would have been charged, had it been directly exported to other countries.

For his part, he firmly believed, that our carrying trade would be essentially injured by allowing a free trade, whereby English ships would enter our ports upon the same terms with our own ships.

It was well known, that before the war, the tobacco imported into France had been farmed out by the government, and that it had been a great source of revenue. He was persuaded that France would not permit that article to be free.

From these and other considerations, Mr. Griswold declared himself unprepared to decide upon a question of so great importance. He was not prepared to say what would be the effects of the principle offered to the house, particularly as the resolution does not say, in the event contemplated, who shall decide, whether the President, or Congress.

Mr. S. Smith agreed with the gentleman from Connecticut, that the great bulk of our exports required an uncommonly large tonnage. But this was an argument why we should secure this important object even if we lost the carriage of the imports of other nations.

The gentleman had referred to the mass of shipping in the eastern states; but he would inform the house that the middle states were competent to carrying their own produce. The gentleman was mistaken in one of his deductions, viz. that which respected our merchants deriving no inconvenience from English duties, as to the quantity of tobacco exported from England on which a drawback was allowed: He affirmed the inquiry to be great. For he would ask what merchant would like to export to England under the uncertainty of his exporting his produce again to other countries.

The gentleman was also mistaken in his allusion to the farmers general of France. They did not monopolise that article. Every man had a right to go there with tobacco. They were only the venders of it. The gentleman was therefore further mistaken, when he said our merchants could not compete with French merchants.

Mr. Smith was anxious that the earliest attention of Congress should be paid to this important subject. France had not at present vessels to carry our produce: availing ourselves of the situation in which she was at present placed, we might by this proposition gain her assent to the principles of a free trade, whereby a large share of our carrying trade would be preserved which otherwise might be lost. Unless the opportunity that now [illegible] was immediately seized, it might nev[illegible]urn.

Mr. Smi[illegible] had at first thought the resolution a [illegible] plain one; but he was almost in[illegible] to think differently of it on finding gentlemen, who were deeply interested in its effects, holding contrary opinions. [illegible] himself, Mr. G. said, he did not fe[illegible] a very lively interest on the subject. The southern states, in a pecuniary view, would not be directly affected by it. Their interests would not be materially promoted or impaired whether their productions were carried by foreign merchants or by those of other states. Not but that they would greatly prefer the latter mode.

From the remarks which had fallen from the gentleman from Connecticut, he appeared entirely to mistake the effects of the resolution.

Mr. Giles believed the countervailing duty laid by the British to be unauthorised by the treaty. Taking our duties as the basis, they had countervailed them, and applying the countervailing standard to separate and distinct articles, they had imposed heavy duties upon them, below, however, the maximum, giving up, as they said, a right, and granting what they called a favor. The result was the preference of British bottoms over American, as stated by the gentleman from Maryland.

Under the British treaty, Britain was authorised to lay countervailing duties; but we were prohibited from countervailing them. The only question, then was, whether we would patiently submit to the present inequality, whereby nearly the whole of our carrying trade might be destroyed, or take our chance in an equal competition.

The ideas of the gentleman as to dispatch were certainly correct. No time ought to be lost consistently with deliberation. It was not however the desire of Mr. G. to be precipitate. The moment was propitious, we ought to seize it. France is now without shipping; but she has great resources, and may, unless we adopt decisive measures, buy