*Dutch bonds, credit notes, obligations,* &c. to the benefit of the *land* and *naval force under* the command of gen. Bowyer, and rear admiral sir Alexander Cochrane, K. B. and the judge at the same time decreed the *public buildings* to belong to his majesty the king of the united kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland.

## TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

No. V.

Having established the position, that but for the Embargo war would have been inevitable, it remains to consider the relative effects of these alternatives.

Had war been resorted to, it is far from improbable, strange as the fact might be, that it would have been with both England and France, and all the nations politically connected with the latter. For although it be demonstrable that the original great violations of our neutral rights came from Great Britain, yet, inasmuch as France has, without any just cause, followed her example, it would have been too late for us to attempt to draw any line of difference between them. However things may have originally stood, both nations are now, and have been for some time, equally aggressors.

It may be said that such a war would be impossible; that a demonstration of hostility towards either nation would have injured the friendship of the other. But this is by no means certain so far as it relates either to their disposition, or our own. Is there any reason to believe that England would, as the price of our declaring war against France, suffer our trade to pass undisturbed, or admit us to a wider immunity of interests with her own subjects than we at present enjoy? The inevitable effect of being at war with France would be in some degree at least to cripple our power, to lessen the capital at present embarked in commerce, and proportionably diminish our means of resistance against the pretension of Britain to the exclusive dominion of the ocean. Thus hampered, there is every reason to infer that our commercial rival would restrain, instead of enlarging, the freedom of our trade, and would make us in a greater degree tributary than we should be, in a period of peace. Her *friendship* would be like that of all powerful nations; and she would be more likely to hug us to death than to cherish and maintain our interests. There is no reason to believe that we should yield to such pretensions, or, in other words, that we should risque a coalition with her.

On the other hand, those who nurture a spirit of discontent at the embargo will be the last to recommend a coalition with France against England. As there appears to be no man among us who even dreams of such an event, it would be mere quixotism to combat the position. The naked fact probably is that, after the experience we have had, there is no administration which could emanate from the people, that would be so infatuated as to propose a close coalition of interests, by political association, with either nation; and should it be proposed, there is no doubt that the great body of the people would indignantly reject it.

War, therefore, would most probably be carried on with both nations.

The necessary effect would be a total destruction of our neutrality and trade. In addition to the inhibition to export our commodities would be superadded an inhibition to import those of foreign nations. There would not be a port, in the world, open to us, and, ours would be shut, so far as we could shut them, against a hostile world. There would, however, be this unfortunate difference between us. While we were destitute of means of *forcing* a trade with them, they would have the means of attacking our rich depots, and, no doubt, would do it, and of committing consequent spoliations to an unlimited amount, to supply their own pressing wants

In this respect war would be a *complete* embargo; it would be a practical application of the principle of the present embargo to a much greater extent. All the arguments, therefore, brought against the latter, would apply with increased strength against the former.

Our only resort would be to privateering. Let us examine it effects. The tonnage of the shipping of the United States may be taken at one and a half millions, and may be valued, in its present state at fifty millions of dollars. Supposing, that we should take as many vessels as are taken from us, the maintenance of our full establishment of tonnage would be requisite to furnish us with our present supplies. Let us, also, admit that our merchant men would do for privateers. This is giving this species of operations the greatest possible advantage. The expence, incurred, from arming them, would, on a very moderate estimate, equal the first cost. Their annual maintenance would cost at least three times that incurred in times of peace, owing to the augmented number of seamen and military stores. This would come to about fifty millions of dollars a year. The effect, consequently, of the conversion of our merchant vessels into privateers, would be an augmentation in the capital required of fifty millions, and in the annual expenditure of fifty millions more.

The whole of this expence would be incurred, not so much for the purpose of forcing the exportation of our own products; as for that of capturing the commodities of the belligerent nations. Of these last we consume at present but about fifty millions; supposing, then, that we should take to this amount, we should have to pay for it the value of the annual maintenance of our shipping, with the interest on the capital, amounting at six per cent. to six millions, and making altogether fifty-six millions of dollars. The game would, of course, be a losing one.

This calculation is on the ground that while we took the vessels of our enemies, they would not take any of ours. But as there is every probability that they would capture a full moiety of the whole taken, this loss would be to be superadded.

Should it so happen that a foreign market would be opened for the disposition of our produce, the following would be the result, on the favorable supposition that our chances of capture on the ocean were great to those of our enemies.

1. The absorption of a new capital of fifty millions of dollars.

2. The increasing annual expenditure of fifty millions.

3. The interest chargeable, on the old & new capital, amounting to six millions.

It would follow that our trade would be exposed to an additional annual burthen of fifty-six millions of dollars.

But under such accumulated burthens, it would be impossible to carry on our trade without utter ruin. It is obvious that most of our articles of export, would not sell in the foreign markets at a price much advanced beyond that at which they ordinarily stand; and that very considerable rise in their prices would either altogether prevent their sale, or considerably abridge it by diminishing the consumption. While, therefore, we got but a small advance for our produce, the foreign articles imported would be chargeable with the remaining expences as our trade. The difference between the enhanced price of our exports, and of foreign imports, would constitute a balance against us, which amounting to at last one half the encreased expence, would operate as an annual drain of twenty-eight millions of dollars. Such a trade could not be carried on without ruin; and it is, therefore, but fair to infer that it could not eventually be carried on at all; and that, consequently, our merchants, after the loss of incalculable wealth, would impose upon themselves a voluntary embargo.

There remains to add to this estimate of the effects of war, the expences incident to our defence. Whatever might be the real danger of invasion, there can be no question but that it would be menaced; without an adequate protective force our frontiers would be embroiled, and our interior disturbed by insurrections among the blacks. To prevent or repress these effects a considerable effective force would be indispensable. It is useless to enquire whether this force ought to consist of regulars or militia; as the expence in either case would be the same; the only difference would be that in the case of regulars it would be defrayed by the government, and in the case of militia by the citizens individually. A force, equivalent to that of 30,000 regulars, would cost ten millions; add to this five millions for fortifications and gun boats, and we have an increased annual expence of fifteen millions chargeable, in addition to that already stated, to the protection of our trade; for it ought not to be lost sight of that this calculation is one altogether of pecuniary profit and loss.

Such are the outlines of the *pecuniary* effects of war.

Let us now enquire into the effects of the embargo.

The evils resulting from it may be divided into,

Those felt by the merchant; and

Those felt by the farmer and planter.

In the case of the merchant, there is in general a mere suspension of business. So far as he owns articles of a perishable nature there is a positive loss, and this is the case with his shipping; though it remains to be seen, whether at the raising of the embargo the enhanced prices paid for shipping and for the articles exported will not amply remunerate his present losses.

Estimating the commercial capital of the U. States at 100 millions, and the mercantile profit at ten per cent. his loss, from not continuing his trade, cannot exceed ten millions. If to this be added five millions on account of the perishable property of the shipping, and an equal loss for the injury on other perishable articles, we have an aggregate of twenty millions.

As an offset to this, it is but fair to put down the increased price of foreign goods, which, estimated at ten per cent. on fifty millions amount to

| | |
|---|---|
| | 5,000,000 |
| The increased price paid in foreign markets for his goods, stored previously to the embargo, which may be confidently computed at* | 5,000,000 |
| And the increased cheapness of living during the continuance of the Embargo, which may be estimated at | 2,000,000 |
| Making altogether, | 12,000,000 |

This leaves a deficit of 8,000,000, which will in a great measure be met by the new employment given by him to that portion of his capital disengaged from trade.

It follows that the injuries sustained by the merchant will be inconsiderable. Those, indeed, acquainted with the principles of political economy know how difficult it is materially to injure this class of men, who, drawing all their profits from the consumption of the other classes of society, likewise saddle them, with very few exceptions, with their losses.

On the farmer and planter the injury will principally fall. They will be either kept out of the value of their surplus produce for a considerable time, or be obliged to sell it at a reduced price. Happily, however, they are generally in such circumstances, that unless the embargo be of unlooked for duration, they will have the means of retaining their produce for sale until a more propitious season shall arrive. In the mean time it is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate with any precision the amount of pecuniary loss. But it will be manifest to any man, who reflects on the subject that it will fall far short of fifty or sixty millions, which we have seen would be the increased annual expence of war. This is evident from the whole amount of our domestic exports falling considerably short of fifty millions, and from the loss actually sustained being limited to the value of the articles which shall perish before the embargo is raised, and to the eventual diminution of the foreign demand for the residue. The actual loss cannot surpass the amount of these two items, which itself will in all probability form but an inconsiderable part of the whole; as the tobacco, the cotton, the rice, usually exported, may be kept uninjured for several years, and as these articles constitute the larger portion of our exports.

2. The second view, worthy of notice, is that the embargo, though the cause of much individual distress will produce little national loss of wealth; while war would most extensively produce both.

The degree in which war would produce a loss of property almost defies calculation. Our whole commerce might be swept into the possession of our enemy at a blow, thereby enriching her at our expence by taking its full value from the national stock.

The embargo has the advantage of securing the whole mass of national property; of concentrating our means; and of preparing us for the day of danger.

3. The embargo will necessarily produce an economical expenditure of the public monies; war would not fail to produce a lavish disbursement of them. All that can be required under the former is a moderate preparation for defence; while under the latter, a more extensive preparation for defence would be indispensable, and the infinitely more expensive means of offensive operations might be called for. At present, under the embargo, an extraordinary expenditure of three or four millions has been thought sufficient; once engaged in war, the extraordinary expences would not fall short, of twenty millions. If these were drawn from loans they would not fail to clog our future growth; and if from present taxes to operate most oppressively.

4. The embargo withdraws us altogether from a political association with foreign nations; war would bind together our common destinies. Is there any thing in the condition of the foreign world generally, or in that of any one state in particular that ought to tempt us, at any price whatever, to embark our interests with theirs? If there be not, if this is the decided conviction of our countrymen, they ought to consider war as among the greatest curses that could befal us, and not to murmur at any lesser evil that saves them from it.

5. The embargo protects not only our trade, but likewise our political institutions, from injury or ruin, by withdrawing us from all collisions with foreign powers. War would expose our political institutions to hazard, not only by the direct effect of those collisions; but still more so by the interior system which would require adoption. Large armies, heavy taxes, vast and almost unlimited powers, a patronage extended and ramified through the whole community would expose our system to one of the most severe trials to which it could be subjected.

6. Finally, the embargo may be temporary; war would, in all probability, be of a long duration. This point is of sufficient importance to be treated separately, and shall be reserved for the next number.

AN AMERICAN WHIG.

*A profit nearly equal to this has been made on the single article of tobacco.

*To the Editor of the National Intelligencer.*

SIR—In your paper of Friday last I remarked a communication from "A Proprietor," on the subject of the ensuing election for the City Council. The slightest reflection must convince every individual of the injurious tendency of such publications. The most innocent inflame the public mind on trivial occasions, and the generality are too frequently made the vehicle of personal allusion and invectives.

The immediate tendency of the Proprietor's publication is to add another source of discord and dissention to the many which already distract our unfortunate city, and to excite among the citizens an unfounded jealousy of those who use every exertion to promote the general welfare of the community and whose interests are materially connected with their own. The substance of his remarks amount to this: that the great proprietors of the city ought to be oppressed by arbitrary exactions in order that they may be induced through distress to sacrifice their property. It is not my intention to descant on the benevolence of such a principle; nor on the justice of injuring a neighbor for the selfish purpose of deriving benefit from his misfortune. But I hope I may be permitted to examine whether the measure recommended by this sagacious writer is either necessary or politic.

In my humble opinion the funds of the city of Washington which on the treasurer's books amount to nearly $9,000 are amply sufficient for every necessary purpose, if they were properly appropriated. But it is not astonishing, that complaints should be uttered on the subject, when we see those funds absorbed in the establishment of free schools, in the support of a lazy and vicious poor, collected from all parts of the country, in building poor houses in distant situations, where no work or employment can be given them; in opening streets, on which a pathway is scarcely perceptible through the grass that immediately covers them; and in making wharves, where there is only water enough for boats. Economy and prudence exercised in the expenditure of the existing revenue would remove every complaint; and would certainly be more beneficial to the city, than a recurrence to a heavy system of taxation for the supply of extravagance.

If however more money is wanted for internal improvements in the city than what is now annually received, the Proprietor ought to have told us what those improvements were, and we might then have decided whether there was any foundation for his complaint; but this is not pretended or attempted, and his only apparent object in wishing our taxes to be encreased, is to make the great proprietors sacrifice their property. It will however be found on reflection, that such a measure would produce an effect diametrically opposite. A proprietor will value his property at the same rate and in the same proportions as the public; and in all the sales he makes he will take care to be indemnified for the taxes he has paid. Encrease his taxes, and he will encrease the price of his lots, and when he finds that the taxes raised therefrom are spent in improving his property, he will be justified in doing so. The policy recommended by the writer in your paper would only bring the worst lots into market, and would resemble the narrow conduct pursued by arbitrary princes, who by compelling their subjects in periods of famine, to sell their provisions at a low stipulated price, ultimately encrease the evil intended to be removed.

But is it advisable or just to distress or ruin the persons who have expended their fortune for the welfare and establishment of the city. Their exertions were made at a period when the city was solitary and unfriended; and it is not therefore wonderful, that the amount of their services cannot be estimated by those who like the Proprietor, that has addressed the public through the medium of your paper, have only resided here since our prosperity began to dawn. But for the exertions of two of the proprietors Congress could never have sat on the Capitol Hill; the Capitol would never have been finished; and the seat of government would have been long since removed. Dissatisfied as the members of Congress now are with their accommodation, what would have been their sentiments, if they had scarcely seen a house within a mile of the Capitol. Nor have the great proprietors been backward in encouraging individual improvements. Their names are never wanting on any subscription paper. They have given several lots for public purposes; advanced money to persons to assist them in building, and bestowed property on many for similar purposes. In every contemplated measure for the general good they forwarded it to the utmost of their power by their fortune, their influence and their pen. But have they ever been repaid for these exertions? Far from it. Their houses do not yield 3 per cent. the majority of their lots cannot be sold at any price. The taxes paid by Mr. Carroll amount to at least 30 per cent. on his income; those paid by Mr. Law to above 15 per cent; and what is paid by other large proprietors bear a similar proportion to their receipts. Are not such contributions enough for the general good? And do those who pay them find the improvements that are made out of their money by the council ever regard their interest or convenience?

But it is said that two at least of the proprietors in consequence of the prospect of a bridge being erected over the Potomac, have raised the price of their lots, 100 per cent. above what they had previously demanded. Admitting the assertion to be correct, I would ask whether such a thing ought not to have been expected? I should also wish to know by the author of the publication under consideration what gentlemen are particularly alluded to. If the remark is intended to apply to a gentleman who has not lately been in the City of Washington, I personally know and publicly declare that the assertion is destitute of truth.

I am sorry to have been obliged to occupy so much of your paper and to trespass so far on the attention of the public on local subjects. But it is the duty of every citizen, to arrest the progress of unjust and unnecessary jealousies, and I shall therefore hope you will not refuse this communication an early insertion in your newspaper.

A CITIZEN.

*AN act making an appropriation for finishing the Infirmary and Tobacco Ware-house.*

SEC. 1. BE it *enacted by the First and Second Chambers of the City Council of Washington,* That a sum not exceeding five hundred dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated for finishing the Infirmary to be expended by the commissioners appointed to erect the same.

SEC. 2. *And be it enacted,* That a sum not exceeding fifty-four dollars for discharging bills due upon the Tobacco Ware-house, and the further sum of ten dollars for finishing and improving the same be and is hereby appropriated to be expended by the Commissioners appointed for that purpose.

FRED. MAY,
*President of First Chamber.*
CHARLES MINIFIE,
*President of Second Chamber.*
Approved, May 30, 1808.
ROBERT BRENT, MAYOR.

*AN act making an appropriation for the payment of the expences attending the election of Members of the City Council.*

BE it *enacted by the First and Second Chambers of the City Council of Washington,* That the sum of thirty dollars be and is hereby appropriated for the payment of such necessary expences as may be incurred in holding the ensuing election for members of the City Council, payable by the Treasurer if allowed by the Mayor.

FRED. MAY,
*President of the First Chamber.*
CHARLES MINIFIE,
*President of Second Chamber.*
Approved, May 30, 1808.
ROBERT BRENT, MAYOR.