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CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

DEBATE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS CONTINUED.

December 7.

(Mr. Campbell's speech concluded.)

But suppose you were to pursue this trade in opposition to those insuperable objections, its amount would be so inconsiderable, as to afford the country no sensible relief; it would not claim the public attention, and could in no point of view be considered as any compensation for the hazard you would incur of a ruinous and predatory war. I have made another brief statement from authentic sources, to shew the value of this trade to the respective countries, that had not, on the 22d December, 1807, passed edicts violating our commerce. This statement relates to the exports of the year ending the 30th September 1807.

DOMESTIC PRODUCE.

Countries.	*Exported.*
Russia	78,850
Sweden	56.157
Colonies of Sweden	416,509
Portugal	829 313
Colonies of Potugal	570,303
Turkey and Barbary	12,878
African Western coast	359,724
China	84,022
South Sea and N. W. coast of America	14,162
In all	2,432,118

These are all the countries, which at the time the embargo was laid had not passed orders or decrees violating your lawful commerce, and with which you had carried on any trade. Hamburg and Germany are not mentioned, being in possession of France. The whole amount of the commerce, that could be carried on with those countries, therefore, is as stated less than two millions and a half of dollars. For it must be confined to the exports of your own produce. I know there has been exported to the same countries, of foreign produce during the same period, about 3,361,917 dollars. But this amount cannot be taken into the calculation, for the reason already given relative to the former statement, that we could not obtain the foreign goods, which used to supply this branch of trade. It is also to be remarked here that our imports would be governed by our exports, and would not exceed them for want of means to pay for the surplus. But some gentlemen have lately said you can now go on the same terms to Spain and her colonies. There is no sufficient ground to believe that the ports of Spain are open to us; so far as she is controled by France, her former decrees are still in force, and so far as she is governed by the new order that has lately arisen there, the Juntas, we have no assurance whatever from them on the subject; and what is still more important, our vessels sequestered in their ports have not yet been released. But suppose you could now go to Spain and her colonies, your exports to them in domestic produce are short of four millions of dollars; so that the whole trade you could pursue even at this time on the most extended plan proposed, and at the hazard of fighting the navy and privateers of Great Britain, as well as those of France, would be less than six and a half millions of dollars; which certainly would not even if we were to be guided by mercenary views, (which I hope will never controul the councils of this nation, when its best interests and rights are at stake) be any adequate object for national humility and disgrace, or even for the danger to which you would expose your commerce, of becoming a sure and easy prey to the cruisers of both those powers.

But it is difficult to comprehend what precise object gentlemen have in view, on the subject of arming for defence. No specific proposition has been brought forward for arming your merchant vessels, that designated what gentlemen meant by the term; or what authority they contemplated giving them. To send out your commerce without arming, would be submission of the meanest and most humble kind. If you permit them to arm what is the consequence? If they are authorised to capture vessels belonging to the belligerents, this is war at once, and ought to be so understood; and if gentlemen are serious in the determination to go to war, let them say so, and we may probably join them. But if you do not authorise your merchantmen to capture, you send out your commerce to become a prey to both Great Britain and France, you expose your merchants to be plundered without a chance to retaliate. This would result in the destruction of your commerce, and would be almost as degrading to the nation, as unconditional submission.

I have presented those statements which I have made, in relation to the amount of commerce, that could be enjoyed according to any plan suggested, and the probable result of pursuing any such commerce, not so much with the expectation of being able to give the House much new information, as with the view to correct misrepresentations which have been made on this floor, and have gone abroad on this subject. I shall compress the additional remarks I have to make within as narrow a compass as may be in my power. It was observed in regard to the embargo, that it has been approved of by France, and not complained of by Great Britain. This is a question which I feel no disposition to examine in this place. Whether this assertion be correct or not, I should presume could not affect the decision of the question before you. If it be correct, however, if those powers are satisfied with the embargo it proves beyond a doubt, that those who announced it as a war measure last year were totally mistaken, and that all their objections to it on that ground (and that was the principle ground on which it was then opposed) were altogether unfounded; this it would seem might silence them on this subject. But it may be proper to observe that those powers have no right to object to it, however hard it may press upon them. It is a municipal regulation, a measure we have an undoubted right to adopt, without being considered just cause of complaint to any foreign nation. But, sir, so far as regards the fact as stated, I am not disposed to believe it; there is no substantial proof to support it. The best information shews the embargo has made a very serious impression, on the people of Great Britain, and has had a powerful effect there, though it may not have produced the desired result. Facts speak stronger language, than any thing stated in official letters from Secretaries, or announced in newspapers. The insurrections of the starving mechanics, the high price of provisions, the alarms throughout that whole country on account of apprehended famine, are strong proofs of the operation of the embargo. But if it did not produce the effects in that country which might have been expected, we cannot be responsible for that. We are not accountable for the conduct of foreign nations; and the circumstance of their not feeling a measure as strongly as might have been expected, is no sufficient reason why we should not persevere in it, if it is a wise and proper measure, productive of good effects at home; it has certainly saved our property and hitherto kept us free from the calamities of war. If it has not, however, produced all the good effects that were expected, there are many strong reasons can be assigned for it, that could not have been foreseen, and were not within the control of those who passed it; among these may be mentioned the numerous evasions of it in certain parts of the union, which were shamefully countenanced by many whose standing in society gave just grounds to expect from them a different line of conduct. By these means the measure was deprived of much of its coercive efficacy; many of the most corrupt and profligate characters enriched themselves at the expence of the honest part of society, and at the same time to the great benefit of the enemies of their country. In saying this I do not mean to apply the remark to any general section of the country, but to the individuals concerned in the violations of the law, and those who encouraged or countenanced them; their conduct will stain their characters and names with reproach for ages to come. It is a kind of treason against the state, of the most insidious and dangerous kind; like murder produced by poison, it corrodes the vitals of the body politic, in so secret a manner that the perpetrator most generally evades the punishment his crime so justly deserves. Such characters, and those who countenance them, ought to be detected if possible, and severely punished; they ought to be marked as enemies to their country; in particular they ought to be distinguished as enemies to the commercial interest of the nation; having at the expence of the honest merchant, aided those who have endeavored to extinguish the vital principles of your commerce; they have robbed their own country to befriend and support its enemies; and so in effect do all those who, at this awful crisis, oppose and revile their own government, and justify or excuse the aggressions of foreign powers; but let them remember the day of retribution is probably near at hand, when they may have to account for their conduct in a summary way; when they must determine to which side they belong, to America or to Great Britain; when they must they must take their stand in the ranks of their own country or declare for its enemies; the time must soon arrive when this distinction will be made, and then, I trust, it will appear who are the real friends of their country, and who are rotten hearted foreigners.

Other circumstances contributed, no doubt, very much to prevent the embargo from producing that effect on foreign nations which might have been expected; of these may be noticed the numerous misrepresentations that were industriously disseminated abroad, in regard both to the pressure of it on the people here, and to their disposition to submit to and support the measure. Its pressure was exaggerated, and painted in the most extravagant colours, without regard to truth; the spirit of the people was misrepresented, as being in general hostile to the law, and disposed to resist its execution; when in fact the discontents were confined to a very small section of the union, and excited there by the leaders of a small faction, many of whom are evidently the agents or warmest friends of Great Britain, and all of whom are the bitter enemies of their own government, and have for years opposed every measure calculated to promote the interest of this country. Your public prints teemed with falsehoods, and mistatements on this subject; insurrections were announced in some quarters of the union as likely to take place, and dreadful distress stated to prevail every where. These groundless misrepresentations, circulated for party purposes alone, went abroad, and had, no doubt, considerable influence on the conduct of foreign nations; they gave credit to them, and were induced to believe that the people of this country would not endure a continuance of the embargo; that they would soon force the government to repeal it. Those powers encouraged by such publications, determined, notwithstanding they were sorely pressed by the embargo, to persevere in their aggressions, under the hope that we would not long continue this measure, and that we would ultimately submit to their terms. To this shameful conduct of a portion of your own people, sir, this country owes in a great degree the continuance of its present difficulties, and the inefficacy of the embargo. The great outcry made with regard to the distress and pressure produced by this measure at home, is in a considerable degree unfounded; your people do not suffer in any part of the union, for want of the necessaries of life; they have a superabundance of them; there is no such thing as suffering for want, known in this country; there is only a temporary pause in the rapid acquisition of wealth; a cessation of profits only; I do not mean to be understood to say, that the American people do not feel the embargo, I know they do feel it sensibly; and they must have expected to feel any measure that would be likely to press hard on those who violate their rights. But the great difference between its effects on us and on them is this: among our people it occasions a superabundance of all the necessaries of life, and the only ground of complaint is, the want of a market for the surplus; whilst their people suffer and complain aloud for want of enough of the necessaries of life, essential for their subsistence, and which they cannot obtain from any other quarter. No one will hesitate on deciding whose situation is most eligible, and least to be complained of, that of those who have too much, or of those who have not enough to subsist upon. Another reason may also be assigned, why we could not anticipate the precise effect of the embargo on foreign powers; we could not foresee, that the governments of those powers would not regard the distress and sufferings of their people; that France would suffer her West India colonies to be almost desolated with famine, and to be compelled to apply to their inveterate enemy, to save them from actual starvation, rather than revoke her decrees; nor could we know that the government of Great Britain would be regardless of the complaints and representations of her manufacturers, and a respectable portion of her merchants; that it would lend a deaf ear to the hungry cries of the starving mechanics, and silence the just and loud complaints with the thunder of their murdering guns and quenching their hunger with a shower of balls instead of bread; we cannot be culpable for not anticipating such events.

It has been said by the gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Quincy) that the people of New England will descend upon the ocean—that they will not bear this measure. If this be intended as a threat—if the gentleman meant that the people of New-England are determined to resist the laws of the union, let him say so; let us know it, and we will act accordingly. [Mr. Quincy said, he did not mean or think, that they would resist the laws.] Mr. Campbell continued. I am happy to hear the gentleman explain his expressions in the manner he has done, it will render unnecessary some remarks I intended to make on that point. I hope, sir, these people will not oppose the laws of their country. I feel a confidence that the genius of liberty has not deserted New England, and that a large majority of the people there would rally round the standard of their government when the occasion required it. From the best information I have been able to obtain, the people of one of those states, (I mean Connecticut) which has generally differed in political sentiments from the present administration, still retain the spirit of independence, and a sense of the value of their constitution and civil liberties—and would be among the first to put down any open opposition to the laws—to crush in embryo the demon of insurrection. This, sir, I hope is true, it breathes the surviving of spirit '76—it is highly honorable to those people—it proves them to be honest in their sentiments and good citizens. While the laws passed by a constitutional majority are in force they will support them; still they may justly claim the right, if they do not think them wholesome, to disapprove of them and use all constitutional means to procure their repeal. I would, sir, still indulge a strong hope, that a large majority of the people of the very state from which the gentleman (Mr. Quincy) comes, would, when called upon support the laws of their country, and punish the lawless wretches who dare openly set up the standard of opposition. If gentlemen acknowledge that this is the case, I trust we shall not again hear the language of menace on this floor. On this subject I concur perfectly in sentiment with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Randolph) that if any portion of the people oppose a public law they must be reduced to submission, and I would be among the first to compel obedience to it—and I would also, as stated by the gentleman from Maryland, (Mr. Nelson) if the disease required bleeding, use the lancet and that promptly too. Yes, sir, whoever would attempt to raise the standard of insurrection, should be made a public example of, as the enemy to independence and civil liberty—as the agent or tool of a foreign power.

It has been repeatedly said, the people of New England will not bear this measure, that there will be a separation of the states. Such sentiments cannot be entertained or countenanced by any true American—by any friend to his country. They may be cherished by the agents and tools of G. Britain—by the enemies of our constitution and independence, and by them alone. A separation of this union, sir, can never be contemplated or countenanced by any portion of the people, even of New England, who are real Americans. Such a disposition can only exist among a few unprincipled and restless spirits, who regardless of the general good, wish to become the petty tyrants of the people in that quarter—to lord it over them—make them groan under heavy taxes and finally strip them of their liberty and independence; and probably to render their object more certain, would throw themselves under the fostering care of G. Britain, and become openly, what they now are secretly, her very minions and humble tools.

To enable them to effect this object, they may endeavor, under false pretences, to spirit up the people there to a severance of the union, in order to withdraw them from the protection of the general government and constitution, which guarantees to every state a republican form of government, and is to the people their strong shield against tyranny and oppression. To this group, however, this little insignificant group alone, must be confined any intention or disposition whatever to oppose the laws or sever the union. The great body of the real Americans of New England who descended from the illustrious heroes of '76, and who hold dear the liberty and independence for which their fathers fought and bled, will not endeavor to stab the very vitals of their own country—they will not enlist under foreign banners—they will not in the day of danger be arrayed against their country—they will be found in the ranks of those who dare to fight and shed their best blood for their country. But if the people of that quarter were to consider this proposition of a separation from the union correctly, even in a pecuniary point of view, and as regards their own interest alone, they must reject it, without hesitation. A great proportion, (at least four-fifths) of the shipping of New England, find employment in carrying to market the produce of the middle, southern and western states. The whole produce of their own soil, does not exceed in value seven or eight millions of dollars, out of 48 millions exported by the U. S. whilst the single article of cotton in the southern and western states, exceeds in value fourteen millions of dollars. They are therefore the mere carriers for the middle and southern states. Cut off their connection and commerce with them, and where would they find employment for their immense tonnage of which they so much boast? What would become of it? Where would they get employment for their seamen? Their ships would rot at their wharves, or float empty upon the ocean—they could not furnish them with cargoes, and their boasted commerce would soon dwindle away into a mere trifle compared with its present flourishing condition. Have gentlemen who make these insinuations about a separation of New England from the union, seriously considered the subject in these points of view, and fairly weighed the consequences? If they have not, it is high time they should. These remarks are made to shew that New England cannot possibly have any interest in such a measure—that on the contrary it would be ruinous to the best interests of the people, and cannot therefore, unless they are totally deluded, be countenanced by them.

It is with some reluctance I come to notice some remarks made by a gentleman from Massachusetts, (Mr. Quincy) with respect to the report under consideration—that abstract legislation generally proceeds from ignorance, or wickedness, or—[Mr. Quincy requested to explain, he said his remarks were intended to apply to the doctrines recommended, and not to the style of the report or the committee who made it.]—Mr. Campbell proceeded, I shall, sir, generally be willing to take gentlemen's gentleman's explanation of the meaning of what they have said. I had intended to make some observations in answer to the remarks of the gentleman on this point, as I understood them, as relating to the report; but as it is now stated they were not intended to apply to the committee, or the report itself, I shall omit those remarks and say nothing on that point. The gentleman however, in another place observed, that the principles contained in the report were loathsome. I do not, sir, profess to comprehend his meaning very distinctly, when he applies the term loathsome to the principles of the report. A principle may be incorrect or improper to be supported, but how it can be loathsome is not very obvious—[Mr. Quincy said he had alluded to the course, not the principles]—I will take the gentleman's explanation, (said Mr. C.) tho' I took his words down as I have stated them; the course proposed is loathsome; this amounts to the same thing; the course proposed is founded on the principles assumed, and the facts stated in the report, and consists of the resolutions annexed thereto. How these can be called loathsome is rather difficult to comprehend. But it seems there was a loathing produced; perhaps the appetite was vicious, and not the food presented impure or unwholesome; or are we to understand that the resolution before you, which has been called weak, and so self-evident as not to admit of a doubt, has become so strong as to operate on the gentleman's delicate political stomach as an emetic, and occasion the discharge of that envenomed gall of rancorous enmity to the government, which seems to exist in such abundance, and which is so liberally bestowed on most occasions by that gentleman and others? Should this be the case the result may be favorable one, and less of these bitter invectives may be expected for the future than has been usual. But those kinds of objec-