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SKETCH OF THE DEBATE IN THE HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES ON THE NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT.

[CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.]

JANUARY 10.

Mr. COOK observed, that after so strong a vote for building gunboats, he should scarcely expect the House would refuse to man them. For of what use would they be except they were manned?

The question on striking out the word "gunboats" was taken by Yeas and Nays, and negatived—Yeas 28—Nays 95.

The question recurring on the amendment from the Senate,

Mr. DANA said he was placed in a situation in which he approved one part of the proposition presented to him, and disapproved of another. He felt considerable hesitation in equipping the frigates, because of the use to which they might be applied by the Executive, viz. to enforce the embargo laws; to enforce which in this manner he did not believe would redound on the credit of the U. S. because he did not believe that the effects would be produced by it which gentlemen contemplated. Much greater consequence was of a violation of the rights of the people in executing the embargo laws on land than on water; and when combined was carried in inferior officers, much greater tyranny and insolence was to be expected from the unrestrained exercise of office officers. Employing frigates for the execution of the embargo laws was the least unconstitutional and the least objectionable of any mode. He felt a wish that these laws should be executed by the navy. He feared that the navy might be associated in idea with the laws which they enforced and this give a prejudice against naval force. But nevertheless he thought the propriety of employing responsible officers, overbalanced this consideration. Another reason why he was in favor of equipping the frigates, was, because it would take some time to prepare them, and if a meeting of Congress took place in May or June, it might be expected that the frigates would be removed and then all the frigates would probably be put in service, before which time, if we undertook they could not be prepared. They had been lying at the navy yard here, to wait and be repaired, to be repaired and rot again. Mr. D. observed that in fresh water decay took place more rapidly than in salt water; he wished to send them to their natural element; it would be conducive to their health and to their existence. Another reason he stated why he should vote for the bill, there was an attempt among some gentlemen that there was a probability of war. He has no idea of Congress thus seizing declaring war, because they had made no preparation for it. And if we were to make war, he considered that we should not do it like privateers, but like officers; that it should not be a little by children, but if we meant that preparation should be made for it. Whenever we had war, it must be for our prime and not territorial rights, and he had no idea of abandoning the main ground for which we contended. He was therefore willing to place our frigates on the sea coast. It was a very different question from that of the establishment of a large navy. Had gentlemen considered the importance of a naval force on our coast? Had they considered the propriety of having a force sufficient to repel insults to our harbors? Mr. D. adverted to the superior advantages of our naval situation over that of other nations who could send a force on our coasts. He had said that he had no idea of declaring war; neither had he any idea of any of the nations of Europe declaring war against us. Was a corporal's guard could send Gen. Bonaparte send here, without sacrificing objects on which her interest and honor depended, and the emperor of France exhibit collecting a force to resist the troops of G. Britain in Spain, would he abandon his conquests and the protection of his family, to send a force here where such numerous battalions could be arrayed against them? Another thing; the seasons were against their sending a force here for several months; war therefore was not to be expected this season, except as had been said it was a paper war, another supplemental broadside, as a gentleman had observed; but that species of war, Mr. D. said, he did not take into the question. If we were to have war, he wished an unanimity of sentiment to attend it, without which it would be ineffectual. When this unanimity, the result of the people's sober judgment by free and unbiassed minds, existed, we need fear no enemy. This could not exist when the people were called upon to be friends to their enemies; when they were called upon to be friends with an institution that the people believe to be their enemies. He wished this language to be expelled from our councils. Whatever differences of opinion might exist on political concerns, with respect to foreign nations, he thought we might be sure that we are all ready to maintain the cause of the country; and to indulge in this language was unnecessary and improper. And men long habituated to reproaches, Mr. Dana said, did not feel that motive to broadcloth or silk as those felt who were not accustomed to it. He then adverted to the continuance of and one of the greatest military computers of antiquity having selected a regiment or battalion whose fidelity or courage he had doubted, and placed them in a conspicuous place in the field of battle, appearing to place confidence in them and thus ensuring their good conduct. Mr. Dana said he had arrayed in the attention of gentlemen. He concluded by saying, that because he wished all this country and all the resources of the country, though opposed to a part of this measure, he should not vote (that part relating to gun-boats) he thought it his duty to vote for the amendment.

Mr. SLOAN intimated that he should vote for this amendment to get our frigates from the navy yard, in which they were now placed; to get them out of this state of envelope, and to place them to sea and to freedom.

And the question on the amendment of the Senate was decided by Yeas and Nays as given hereinafter, viz. 95 to 59.

So the amendment was carried in the affirmative.

Mr. GIL. M. CAMPBELL called for the Yeas and Nays on the next amendment relative to the number of seamen, &c.

Mr. D. R. WILLIAMS said he should give a negative, because if the last vote could be rescinded, for he valued property and life less than the liberties of our country, he believed would be destroyed by the consequence of that vote? He believed that the last vote had encouraged men who he had always contended would be brought to be used, improperly, but who had done great and important services to the country—the President and U. S. Attorney, which he did not merit. What was this force for? Those who were desirous of war were perfectly consistent in voting for it; but for those who wished for peace it was the worst measure that could have passed. The first thing done by this navy would be to search out a British frigate and revenge the outrage on the Chesapeake. But a short time would elapse before we should invade an island in peace. But a short time would elapse before we should invade an island in peace. He hoped a disagreement to the present amendment would take place, so as to avoid the subject of the bill; he hoped so, because he was zealous to preserve peace.

Mr. DANA said, that he was one of the minority on the question just taken; he wished that the decision had been different, but the decision having been made, he should vote for all the other amendments, because he conceived it a necessary consequence of having adopted the last.

Mr. MASTERS said that if justice were not done to this nation, we should have no peace, and he regretted for it. He thought there could have been no office of opposition on the part of the Senate, only question had been, whether the embargo was the proper measure. The measure was a British bill, and a tax cause, if not withdrawn, it was a cause of war. He hoped gentlemen would reconsider their votes. He then went into examination of the propriety of possessing large frigates. Mr. Masters declared he had pleased at the vote just taken.

Mr. DANA said no idea of throwing the responsibility on the President of the U. S. by voting for this bill. Congress had the power to raise and support armies and navies; and it had been doubted whether any discretion should ever be given to the Executive on the subject. He had thought that a discretion might be given, but he was sorry to see gentlemen so desirous of the subject. He had thought that Congress should exercise this right. He understood this force was to be employed in our waters, and if foreign nations did come into our waters and insult our national sovereignty, he said he should wish to stand them to respect it. He had no idea of coming war; he wished to give serve peace; he had long paused the yielding to violations of jurisdiction, and to insults in our own waters? And was a resistance of these war? No; it was the exercise of the natural right of all animated nature to resist when injured, and could not be called war in the sense in their hearts. If the defence of our clear and indisputable rights were war, a lot of peaceable people for they must be maintained.

Mr. GHOLSON said he had hardly expected that a question once decided, would be again discussed. For the vote which he had given, he was accountable to his constituents and to his conscience, and not accountable to any honorable gentleman on this floor for it. From the commencement of our government to this present day, said, our coasts had been infested with cruisers and piratical privateers; and it was with a design to drive off these that he had given this vote.

Mr. GIL. M. CAMPBELL wished it to be understood that he should vote against this amendment. He believed the gun-boats had been improperly detained, of its own kind; no such notice as the last amendment had been found on the statute book; it was giving power without means to carry it into effect; it was giving a law to a dead letter, when connected with the small appropriation for the objects mentioned in the preceding amendments. They had heretofore given a discretionary power to call out the militia; he was sorry that they passed a peremptory order that they should be called out. He regretted that the vote had passed; and believed that before one month had elapsed gentlemen would wish they had voted for it would wish that they had not given the vote. It would produce an unnecessary war; he wanted to have a maritime war, and would thus delude the people. They, said he, would find it a sure force for five thousand seamen, and only 9000 promise war; and thus deceive the people carry on a maritime war. Mr. C. said he was willing to meet any enemy, but he was unwilling to meet, yet he did not wish to provoke it. Gentlemen had said that we have been insulted in our waters, which he was our whole force would be employed in the Gulf of Mexico against the British navy. The expence ought not to be overlooked—in expence of this amendment would be twelve hundred sixty. It would be two millions in addition to what it would have been for the amendment, which was at most a room of additional security to be derived from the money expended. He was for the chase and the pursuance to American seamen in distress; but not to employ them because idle, and to be employed in a force that would be productive of mischief. He hoped the gentlemen would find the treasury were discovered, that they would not so idly employ it.

Mr. GHOLSON said he had intended the course of the House for calling gentlemen to order, for shown that the subject of the bill; it has been so, because he was zealous to preserve peace.

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