The National Intelligencer,

AND

WASHINGTON ADVERTISER.

Vol. I. WASHINGTON CITY, PRINTED BY SAMUEL HARRISON SMITH, NEW-JERSEY AVENUE, NEAR THE CAPITOL. *No. LXV.*

Five Dolls. per ann. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1st, 1801. *Paid In Advance.*

For the National Intelligencer.

HISTORY OF THE LAST SESSION OF CONGRESS.

By the structure of our republican government, the supreme power of legislation is vested in Congress. It was unquestionably intended, however different may have been the practice, that all rules of action additional to those prescribed by the Constitution, should be declared by Congress; that the Executive branch should be confined *exclusively* to the ministerial office of giving effect to such rules, and the judiciary, to the application of them to individual controverted cases.

From this view of the distribution of powers made by the Constitution, it results that Congress is the depository of the highest confidence; and that on their enlightened and virtuous discharge of duty, depend the dearest interests of society. In proportion to the good which a correct discharge of duty may accomplish, is the evil which an abuse of it may create. The great restraint against the abuse of power, and the great stay of its just exercise, is the candid expression of the public will. It need not to be concealed that on the constant exhibition of this will, whoever may be the organ of power, we are to rely for the perfection and perpetuity of our liberties, as unrestrained by it, it is the uniform tendency of power to degenerate into abuse.

These remarks are intended to impress on the public, the propriety of a vigilant attention to the conduct of their immediate representatives. And as that conduct is more apt to be distinctly seen, and correctly understood by taking a view of all the measures of a session, in the relation of a part to the whole, than by a detached contemplation of each particular act; it is proposed to review the proceedings of the late session, and to offer the reflections that shall incidentlly arise thereon. The enquiry will be made with as large a portion of regard to the personal feelings of the members of the legislature as a respect for the great interests of society will permit.

The session nominally commenced on the 17th of November; but the two houses did not form quorums until the 21st.

On the ensuing day the President (Mr. Adams,) addressed the two houses in a speech, which, in many respects, seemed the harbinger of concord. It congratulated the people of the United States on the assembling of Congress at their permanent seat, connected wherewith, it expressed a neat and comprehensive eulogium upon the man whose name it bore, and attracted the attention of the legislature to its government.—It stated the discharge, in compliance with law, of the temporary army—It recommended a revision of the judiciary system—It stated the final ratification of a treaty of amity and commerce with Prussia—It stated the non-removal of the difficulties which had suspended the execution of the 6th article of the British treaty—It stated a hope that an accommodation would be effected with France; but declared that it would be committing a dangerous imprudence to abandon measures of self-defence; passed a strong eulogium on the navy, and implicitly recommended its extension, as well as further progress in erecting fortifications and manufacturing arms—It stated the product of the revenue for the last year to have exceeded that of any antecedent equal period; and pronounced such a result an evidence of the wisdom of the measures which had been pursued. After a declaration of these sentiments, it concluded with a congratulation on the contrasted happiness of the United States, compared with other nations, which should convince us that "we ought to fortify and cling to those institutions, which have been the source of such real felicity, and resist with unabating perseverance the progress of those dangerous innovations, which may diminish their influence."

As a composition, the speech was correct in its language; and if it did not merit the encomium of uncommon elegance, neither did it betray coarseness or intemperance.

As it had been the tendency of Mr. Adams's administration to aggrandise the general government, no one was surprised at the recommendation of measures calculated to preserve, if not to extend, our military resources. Some individuals, who had not forgotten the previous intemperance of the President, were surprised at the moderate style in which these measures were now recommended. For this change, however, they found a satisfactory solution in the unequivocal change which had taken place in the public mind.

No one sentiment, contained in the speech, merited more unqualified reprehension, than the condemnation of what was denominated dangerous innovation. The words, in which this sentiment was conveyed, were so guarded, that literally received they only stated an acknowledged truth. But their spirit was to discountenance, under the reproachful term of innovation, those changes in tenets, in practice, and in political institutions, without a recurrence to which *republican* governments, losing their original character, degenerate into instruments of oppression or anarchy.

This Speech received from the Senate a reply, which embodied into more palpable political form the various sentiments communicated in it, and which expressed assurances of the most unreserved approbation and confidence.

The reply of the *House of Representatives* surpassed in energy even that of the Senate. It not only approved the acts and opinions of the President; but amplified them, and with the praise of particular men and measures, mingled the language of denunciation against opposite men and measures; and to the recent acts of the government in relation to foreign powers it ascribed our present peace and all the happiness that attended it.

Mr. Nicholas, in a few words, opposed the Reply as containing political matter calculated to produce discord and division, and concluded by requiring the Yeas and Nays; which were taken and the Reply carried by a majority of only 4 votes.

On presenting the Reply, a number of members withheld their personal attendance.

On the 21st of November Mr. Nicholas offered to the House of Representatives two amendments to the Constitution of the United States, respecting the choice of electors of a President, and members of the House of Representatives.

The first prescribed the election of electors by citizens authorised to vote for the most numerous branch of the state legislature in each state in districts, which should be equal to the number of electors to which each state is entitled.

The second prescribed the election of members of the House of Representatives in the same manner.

The proposition were referred without debate to a committee of five, 3 of whom were federal, and 2 republican.

Towards the close of the session a report was made, which entered at length into a discussion of the necessity and expediency of the proposed amendments. It stated the various modes of election pursued in different states as justified by the latitude of expression used in the Constitution; expressed a full confidence in the ultimate adoption by the states, without any constitutional coercion, of that mode which, from experience, should be ascertained to be the most correct organ of the public will; and concluded with a resolution that it was inexpedient to sanction the proposed amendments.

Though this report was not acted upon by the House, the sentiments it contained, proceeding from those who belonged to the majority of the house, precluded the prospect of an agreement to the alteration of the Constitution, so as to supercede the recurrence of those unfortunate contests which had recently arisen in many of the states.

It had been hoped that the necessity of adopting some uniform plan had become apparent to all; as the only effectual cure that could be applied to the disposition of party in each state to shape the mode of election to its own partial purposes; as the most successful mode of restoring harmony on these interesting points; as the most likely way of obtaining the full and impartial voice of the people; and as calculated in point of time, being proposed at the distance of four years from the ensuing Presidential Election, to operate with the greatest fairness and freedom from the imputation of party motive.

These considerations, however, imperious as they appear to us, and alike applicable to all parties,, who are in pursuit of the general welfare, were overruled, and a blind regard to the Constitution made the apology for their rejection.

On the 24th of November Mr. Wolcott addressed to the House of Representatives a letter intimating his intention to resign on the 1st of January ensuing the office of Secretary of the Treasury; and inviting an investigation into his official conduct. The letter was referred to a committe of 7 members; of whom 4 were federal, and 3 republican.

In January following a report was made; wherein a general view was taken of the treasury department, at the commencement as well as termination of Mr. Wolcott's official duties; from which the committee considered the conduct of Mr. Wolcott to have been upright and intelligent. They pronounced the official arrangements to have been formed with great wisdom; and the duties of the department to have been performed with commendable fidelity. To which effect they submitted a resolution to the house.

(To be continued)

FOR SALE,

A Valuable Tract of

LAND,

LYING in part on the main Richmond road, a mile from the Rappahanock River, four Miles below Fredericksburg, (in a healthy and most agreeable neighbourhood,) containing about five hundred and thirty three ACRES well watered, upon the said Tract there are about two hundred and fifty acres of Wood Land, the greater part of which is equal if not superior in quality to any high lands yet uncleared in Spotsylvania. here are upon it a dwelling-house, necessary out houses, a very large barn, and a most valuable Mill seat, with a mill-house already built, capable of Manufacturing Twenty thousand ushels of wheat annually, after being put in perfect repair. There is also upon it about sixty Acres of first rate meadow land, part of which is already reclaimed and has produced very heavy crops of Timothy Hay. The above Land is bounded by the lands of Gen. A. Spotswood, Messrs Wm. Herndon, Mann Page, Francis Taliaferro, and the Tract the subscriber at present lives on. Any further discription I deem unnecessary as those who may be disposed to purhase will of course view the land. Upon said ract there are about one hundred and thirty Bushels of Wheat sown, the greater part of which look well and promising.

The said tract of land will be sold by the subscriber at private or public sale, three fourths of the purchase money to be paid on the day of sale, and the ballance in twelve months, bearing interest from the date, the purchaser giving bond with approved security. If not sold by private sale, by the first Monday in May next, it will then be sold on the premises on that day if fair, if not the next day to the highest bidder. The land in the mean time will be Shewn to any person who may wish to purchase by Messrs Francis Taliaferro, James Tutt, Wm. Darnaby and the subscriber.

LAURENCE BROOKE.

March 18, 1801. tM

Robert Greenhow.

Merchant in Williamsburg, Virginia.

BEING desirous to withdraw in a great measure from the further pursuit of Business, offers for sale the whole of his well known General and Valuable Assortment of Merchandise amounting probable at their prime cost, to Eight or Ten Thousand pounds sterling, of which an idea may be formed by referring to a printed list deposited in this office—Not wishing to divide the Stock applications by letters post paid will be by im receive l as to the purchase of the whole of it.

Feb. 2, 1801. tAp

DEBATE

In British House of Commons on an Address to the King.

Mr. Grey rose. He confessed that his feelings, when he came down to the house, not from any unmanly despondency, but from doubts whether, under the present state of affairs, any alleviation of the public calamities was to be expected, were not of a very encouraging nature. Those feelings had not been relieved, either by the speech from the chair, or from the mover and seconder of the address. His confidence deserted him when he saw no hope of change in that ruinous policy which had bro't misfortune and disgrace upon the country unparalleled in history. His confidence was still more lessened, when he was told to look up to those persons who were actuated by the same dispositions which had first induced them to adopt the system that had brought the country to its present calamitous situation. He had seen, year after year, the failure of his hopes, and the increase of his fears, under the auspices of those whose measures he was still desired to confide in. Under such circumstances his expectations could not be very flattering. He agreed with the hon. gentleman who had preceded him, that it would be better to avoid entering into any debate upon subjects not before the house. Respecting the subject of the Union between the two kingdoms, the allusion to which formed so prominent a feature in his majesty's speech, he should have been content to have passed it over, but that he feared an improper inference might be drawn from his silence, lest it should be supposed that he who had uniformily opposed that measure while its expediency was under discussion, had now acknowledged his former errors and retracted his sentiments, he was compelled shortly to advert to the subject. The hon. gentleman who had moved the address had stated, that the subject of the Union was not now before the House; he admitted it, and he had not the least intention of provoking any hostile debate; but this he must say, that if it were intended to be a Legislative Union founded upon principles of reciprocal freedom and advantage, such a one might be beneficial to both countries; he was well assured no union between the two countries could be permanent that was not founded on the principles of the settlement in the year 1782. He had seen nothing in the present Union that could justify the idea of its having that settlement for its basis, but, on the contrary, a system entirely subversive of it. The present tranquility of Ireland had been assumed as an argument to justify the Union? Was such an assumption just? Were the people of Ireland quiet, affectionate, and contented towards this country? Had the Government been able to relax any part of that system of coercion by which the people of Ireland had been prevented the unrestrained expression of their opinions?—Was it in contemplation, even at this time, to repeal those measures which had been adopted with regard to that country? If the severe laws which applied to the people of Ireland had been repealed, and it could have been stated they were living happy under the same system by which the people of this country were governed, those facts might have been urged in proof of the good effects produced by the Union. When he reflected upon the situation of Ireland before the Union, while it was in contemplation, and at the present moment, he tho't that it was premature, upon so short a trial, for any one to argue conclusively that its apparent tranquility was attributable to the Union. This was all he should say respecting the subject first referred to in his Majesty's Speech, concurring with the hon. gentleman in wishing the house rather to look forward to what may happen, than back to what has, and expressing a sincere hope, that the opinion he had formed of the Union between the two countries might prove mistaken, and the measure be productive of good effects. He should certainly have had more confidence in the advantages to be derived