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SENATE OF THE U. STATES.

Speech of Gen. S. SMITH on British affairs.

[CONCLUDED.]

I have, Mr. President, thus taken a short view of the injuries, offered to the U. S. in the unjust seizure of their property by order of the government of G. B. in the imposition of higher duties on goods exported by her to the U. S. than those imposed on similar goods exported to other nations. I have not taken notice of the outrageous insults committed by the officers of that government on our national independence, by the impressing of our seamen into their navy, because that subject has already been ably discussed in the Senate during the present session. I cannot, however, forbear to observe, that even the author of "War in Disguise," (written as it is believed under the eye of the British minister,) is compelled again to have recourse to British law to palliate this violent aggression on the liberty of our citizens, which he imposes on the English for the law of the U. S. Every American will detect the error. Speaking of British seamen in American employ, he says "but when and how have these sailors become Americans? By engaging in her service during the last and present war, and sometimes by obtaining that formal naturalization, which is gratuitously given, after they have sailed two years from an American port." A mistatement so gross, so devoid of fact, could deceive no American; it might an English reader. For "*a foreign sailor serving two years on* "*board a British ship of war, be*-"*comes from that service a de*-"*nizen of Great Britain*". Not so in the U. S. *a foreign sailor can become a citizen of the U. S. in no other way than any other alien can.* The trouble and difficulty of obtaining the rights of citizenship is such, that I verily believe there never has been ten foreign sailors naturalized within the U. S. I do not mean to include herein such foreigners as have become officers in our merchant or naval service.

But why, it may be asked, does Great Britain pursue a system apparently so injurious to her true interest, and so hostile to ours? The answer may be found, Mr. President, in the same book, page 71. "They (Americans) sup-"plant or rival the British merchant, "throughout the continent of Europe, "and in all the markets of the Me-"diterranean, they supplant even the "manufactures of Manchester, Bir-"mingham and Yorkshire: For the "looms & forges of Germany, are rival-"ling us by the ample supplies by the "neutral (meaning American) flag, to "every part of the new world." Here, Mr. President, is shown the true cause of our growing prosperity. G. Britain looks with a jealous, envious eye at our increased and increasing commerce, at the immense commercial tonnage of the U. S. It is seen that we have capital equal to our trade, that we have superior enterprise, & intelligence not inferior to their merchants. Yes, sir, we do supplant (not rival) the British merchant every where, *where we can meet him on equal terms.* Yes, sir, we have set the looms of Germany to work, and with their labor we do supply the new world. Passs this resolution, Mr. President, and the looms of Germany will be continued in motion after a peace. Let the Irish nation consider the effect. Let the manufacturers of G. Britain look well to the consequence of our once being diverted from the consumption of their goods. We may never again return. Let the W India planter look to our consumption of his rum, to the amount annually of 2,440,000 dollars, and let him recollect that French Brandy will answer every purpose.

Already, Mr. President, I am sensible that I have taken up too much of the time of the Senate—the importance of the subject will, I hope, induce gentlemen to continue their further attention, whilst I shall proceed to consider the operation of the resolution on our nation as well as on G. Britain. I am free to confess that this resolution does not go the lengths I was prepared to go; however, I have been induced by the reasoning of gentlemen to confine the prohibition to such goods as could be obtained in other countries, or in our own, on terms nearly as cheap as those we now get them at from G. Britain—The argument used, that we ought to adopt no system that we could not (without injury to ourselves) perpetually maintain, had its influence on my mind, and probably will have a proper effect on G. Britain. It ought to have, for she well knows the difficulty of drawing back a commerce, after it has taken another course.

The first article in the resolution, now under consideration, and the importation whereof from G. Britain is proposed to be prohibited is,

Woollens—On this article I shall make no other remark than that fine cloths may be procured in France as cheap as they can *now* be purchased in London—perhaps gentlemen may not be willing to prohibit the importation of coarse woollens; if they should not, I will not oppose their wishes; the quantity required of coarse woollens could not easily (I believe) be procured on the continent. In many of the states the wants of the people would be supplied by their own industry.

Linens—This important article can be procured in Germany as cheap as in Ireland—the British government, it is true, give aid to that manufacture by a bounty on export of one penny halfpenny sterling for every yard under the cost of 18 pence sterling, which make them come on terms something better to the consumer, but not much. *It is our taste—It is the habit we have been in of wearing Irish linens, that induces a preference.* Other nations prefer German linens. So shall we, when by this resolution we are compelled to make use of them. A short time to make the trial, and our taste may induce a continuance even after just arrangements shall be made with G. Britain. Already a preference is given to German fine linens by those who wear them. No other nation, except the British and American, purchase Irish linen—all others prefer the German and French linens. If you pass this resolution, her best customer is lost to Ireland, *perhaps forever.* I pray gentlemen to recollect what I have already stated, to wit—That Ireland, sensible that the 4 per cent export duty laid on British goods to the U. States would be highly injurious to her; remonstrated against it as destructive of their interest, as an inducement which they feared, and with justice, would divert the Americans from the use of their linens—what was the consequence? An immediate repeal of that duty so far as it related to linens—will their remonstrance be less strong when they find we have prohibited their importation altogether? Will they be less heard or attended to? Yes, sir, they will be heard, especially when they can say that this evil is brought on them, *by an act of injustice on the part of the British government towards us,* they will ably contribute their aid to obtain for us justice, agreeably to the well known laws of nations.

Rum—This expensive and destructive article is consumed by the English and the citizens of the United States only—*if the W. India planters lose our custom, they cannot find purchasers elsewhere.* We consume of that article annually to the amount of 2,444 000 dollars. This enables the planter to pay for his provisions, for his family and his slaves—cut off this fund from him, and he will severely feel the loss. I consider this article among the most important proposed, it will cause that valuable class of people, the British colonists, to enquire into the cause—they will find that we have been cruelly oppressed, our property unjustly seized, and they will join their complaints to those of Ireland; they must be heard; Yes, Mr. President, they will be heard, when they tell the minister, that French brandy will soon supply the place of their rum—that when the Americans have once taken a taste for French brandy, they never may, and probably never will return to the use of their rum. But it is said, that our revenue will suffer by prohibiting the importation of this article. Not one dollar, Mr. President. The law will not take effect until November, and the revenue could not thereby be effected until May, 1807, when the last bonds for duties thereon would become due, before which time brandies from France, Spain and Italy, would be imported to meet the full amount of duties that might have been raised on rum, if the importation had continued. The brandy of France and Italy would be paid for by our tobacco, flour, and rice, that of Spain by the two latter articles.

Hardware. This article, as suited to our taste, we can procure in no other country than Great Britain. It was supposed (by your committee) that there were sufficient in the country for two years consumption—before which time a general peace would probably be made.

Hats, nails, glass ware, boots and shoes, can be, or already are made in quantities nearly sufficient for our own consumption; with this encouragement our own manufactures will be found equal to all our wants. Nay, we do now export considerable quantities of hats, boots and shoes.

Coal and slate are in great abundance in our own country.

Looking glasses, ribbons and silks of all kinds can be obtained cheaper in France, China and Italy, than in England—yet such has been our predilection for British goods, such is the strength of habit, that we have notwithstanding gone to England for those goods. This resolution will break the charm, and we shall probably never return there for such goods.

Salt. This is an article highly important as it respects Great Britain. We import thereof from her dominions annually, to the value of 462,392 dollars, being 2,111,401 bushels. To lose our custom on this highly important article, would be severely felt by Great Britain. By us, it would not be felt to any extent—for we should easily replace that quantity from Lisbon, Cadiz, and other parts of Spain, with salt (as I am informed by my learned friend from New-York) more wholesome, and certainly much better for all purposes.

Let not gentlemen fear a loss of revenue. I have taken a view of that subject, and am confident the loss will be trifling—it will never be felt. I take leave to sumit the following view of this subject.

The duty paid annually on the following articles imported from Great Britain and her dependencies, are

	Dollars.
On linens,	21,429
Rum,	1,100,000
Salt,	400,000
Coal,	20,000
Nails,	70,000
Boots and Shoes,	10,000
	1,621,429
Woollens and the other articles, the precise amount of duty cannot be obtained—I presume they might amount to	300,000
	1,921,429

This amount may, and certainly will be met by the following substitutes, to wit—

	Dollars.
Duty on linens from Germany,	21,429
Duty on brandy, from Spain, France and Italy,	1,100,000
Duty on salt, from Portugal, Spain, Italy, and the Cape de Verd Islands,	400,000
Duty on silks, fine woollens, ribbons, looking glasses, from France, Italy, China, and Spain,	100,000
	1,621,429
Probable loss of duties,	300,000
	1,921,429

If it should be the opinion of the Senate, that the importation of coarse woollens and hardwares shall not be prohibited, then I do not believe there will be one dollar loss of revenue, if the resolution should pass.

But, Mr. President, no deficiency can be felt in any case prior to the summer and autumn of 1807—even if a total prohibition of all importations was intended. I pray gentlemen to attend to this subject. The spring importation will arrive in a few weeks—of course no effect can be had on that. The goods for the autumn are now preparing in England, they will come at the usual time, the bonds taken for the duties thereon will be payable in 8, 10, and 12 month, of course as usual in the months of June, August and October, 1807. Something decisive must happen before that period—a negociation will certainly commence, and if gentlemen choose, a power may be given in the bill to the President to suspend its operation, if it shall appear to him that the British government are disposed to enter into an equitable arrangement of all disputes between the two nations.

I have thus endeavored, Mr. President (and I hope I have succeeded) to shew that the measure proposed is not a war measure—that if carried into effect, it is capable of materially affecting the interest of G. Britain without injuring ourselves. That our revenue will not be effected thereby to any considerable amount—that we have justice on our side, and that the conduct of G. Britain has been unjust and cruel towards the United States. If any gentleman should still doubt as to the law of nations being against the doctrine of G. Britain in the dispute in question, I pray him to read the book laid on our table, to wit: "An Examination of the "British Doctrine which subjects to "capture a neutral trade, not open in "time of Peace". A book, Mr. President, written to the understanding, not to the passions, stating uncontrovertible facts, on which to form the judgement, a book that will (I have no doubt) be translated into the languages of all the maritime powers—and will hereafter be quoted as containing truths that may be relied upon.

Erratum in the last paper.

For Madrass, Muscat, China, and other native countries, read Mocha, Muscat, China, &c. &c.

BUST OF WASHINGTON.

The MARBLE BUST OF WASHINGTON By CIRACHI,

Was deposited in Bordeaux before the death of that artist. It is a most elegant specimen of art, remarkable for strength of expression and exact resemblance; superior even to the one previously executed by HOUDON. It is of colossal size.

Mr. Lee, American consul at Bordeaux, has employed an able artist to multiply copies from it in PLAISTER CAST, reduced to the size of life.

He proposes to have them delivered in America, to subscribers only, at TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS each, free of cost, either at the office of the National Intelligencer, or in any port of entry in the United States. No money is demanded till the delivery of the Bust.

Subscriptions received at this Office.

March 24—

CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, MARCH 6.

DEBATE

On Mr. GREGG's Resolution:

[CONTINUED.]

MR. SMILIE. I am in favor, Mr. Chairman, of the resolution under consideration; and lest it should be supposed I am an enthusiast in respect to commerce, and deserve to be classed among that desperate order of men called merchants, according to the representation which we have had yesterday from the gentleman from Virginia, I beg leave to make a few remarks on the abstract question, whether commerce ought to be considered as beneficial in its relation to the U. S. I have long thought that there is an essential difference between what is, in the common language of the world, a splendid and great, and a happy people. I have been led to think, that the situation of the people of the U. S. separated from the rest of the world by an ocean of 3000 miles, possessing an immense region of land, having full employment for all her people in the cultivation of the earth, having, from the variety of her climates and the difference of her soil, the means of supplying herself, not only with all the necessaries of life in abundance, but with many of its comforts, and even some of its luxuries: from these considerations I have been led to think it had been happier if the American people, when they became an independent nation, had found themselves without commerce, and had still remained so Thus circumstanced, they would certainly have avoided those dangers which flow from the weakness of an extended trade, and those luxuries which have hitherto proved so fatal to morals, happiness, and liberty. In my opinion we should have been a happier people without commerce. Among the considerations which have induced me to believe that this would have been a happy state, is, that we should have enjoyed a perfect state of safety. We should not have been under the necessity of conflicting with foreign nations, because commerce, & commerce alone, can produce those conflicts. I have expressed this opinion, to shew that I have not been led by any particular attachment to commerce, to take that part which I have declared I would do on the present occasion. But what was the situation of the American people when they first found themselves a nation? And what are the duties imposed upon us by the compact we entered into? As to any abstract opinions we may entertain on this subject, they ought to have no influence here upon us. I stand *here* on other ground, and dare not resist the dictates of duty. I was astonished yesterday to hear it mentioned by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. J. Randolph) and boldly asserted, referring to the constitution, that the American government was under no obligation to protect any property of its citizens one foot from the shore. I was astonished at this declaration, because I could see to what it went. I saw, if this was the opinion of the southern states, where it would end. The situation of this people, when they became a nation, was this:—The eastern states might properly be said to be a commercial people, as they lived by commerce; the middle states were partly commercial and partly agricultural; the southern states, properly speaking, were agricultural. This opposition of character must have created great difficulty in forming the constitution, and, in truth, this and other points threw great obstacles in the way of its formation. But a spirit of concession overcame all difficulties. Is it, however, to be believed, that the eastern states, properly commercial, or the middle, partaking equally of the commercial and agricultural character, would have united with the southern states, if they had been told that commerce was to receive no protection? No, sir, it cannot be believed. But I take higher ground—the compact itself referred to by the gentleman from Virginia. Let us examine the powers vested in Congress under this compact, and decide whether commerce was, or was not intended to be protected. If there was nothing specific in these powers, the first page would show the intention of its framers. "We, the people of the U. S. in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare," &c. If we go on to the 10th page, we shall there find the power given to Congress "to provide and maintain a navy." Is the protection of commerce contemplated here, or is it not? In other parts of the instrument, we perceive the power to regulate commerce vested in Congress. Will any man pretend to say that the power of establishing a navy can be exercised independent of commerce? Every man of common sense knows that a navy cannot even exist without it.

Having sufficiently established the right of commerce to protection under the constitution, I come now to consider the resolution under consideration. We find our rights invaded by foreign nations, and an attack made by one nation on our carrying trade, which in my opinion cannot be warranted by the law of nations. I shall not condescend to argue this point. I believe it to be a lawful trade, let whoever may deny it. I have taken some pains to make myself acquainted with the subject, by reading several treatises upon it; and notwithstanding the contempt with which a certain book was yesterday treated by the gentleman from Virginia, I will venture to predict, that when the mortal part of that gentleman and myself shall be in ashes, the author of that work will be considered a great man. Nor do I judge in this case exclusively from my own opinion, but from the opinions of men of distinguished talents, from different and distant parts of the union, who all concur in saying that the writer has conclusively established the principle he contends for. Indeed I could not have believed, had I not heard it, that a representative of the American people, in the face of the legislature, would have relinquished so precious a principle! But there was a curious feature in all the luminous discoveries yesterday disclosed to us by the gentleman from Virg. in which he strictly observed the rule of the rhetorician, where a point could not be justified, to get over it as well as he could. On the impressment of our seamen he said nothing. He knew that the American feelings would not bear it. When I think of what is called the carrying trade, I consider it a small evil compared to this. It has been compared to Algerine slavery, but it is worse. What is this impressment? Your citizens are seized by the hand of violence, and if they refuse to fight the battles of those who thus lay violent hands upon them, you see them hanging at the yard arm. In the first place, they are obliged to expose their persons to murder, in fighting the battles of a nation to which they owe no allegiance. They are obliged to commit murder, for it is murder to take away the life of a man who has given us no offence, at the same time that they expose their own persons to the commission of murder. This is the true point of light in which I have always considered this horrid and barbarous act, for which, indeed, I cannot find language sufficiently strong, to express the indignation I feel. This is the situation of our country. Our commerce depredated upon in every sea, our citizens dragged from their homes, and despoiled of all they hold dear. We are told we are not to mind these things, that the nation who commits the outrages is a powerful nation. But really as an American, I cannot feel the force of this observation.

The gentleman from Virginia yesterday assumed it as a principle, and the whole of his argument turned on it, that this is a war measure, & that its friends are for going to war. Were I satisfied of the truth of this remark, I should change my mind with regard to the resolution. But is it a war measure? I believe the same duties and obligations exist between nations as between individuals in a state of nature. If my neighbor treats me with injustice, I have a right to decline all intercourse with him, without giving him a right to knock me down. If we deem it our interest not to trade with a particular nation, have we not a right to say so? A nation with whom we have no commercial treaty, and towards whom, therefore, in regard to trade, we have a right to act as we please. If a commercial treaty existed between us, it would be our duty to observe it; but without one, we have an undoubted right to say whether we have or have not a use for her productions. If, then, this be a peace measure, why treat it as a war measure? But it is said that it will lead to war. Britain is said to be a great nation, high spirited and proud, and therefore we must not take this step for fear of the consequences. Trace this argument. See where it leads us. It leads us to this. That with a powerful nation we must on no account whatever quarrel, tho' she may commit ever so many aggressions on our right. No, we must not, let her go whatever length she may, until on this same principle, we shall be called upon to surrender our independence, because we have to deal with a powerful nation! If we do not make a stand now, against her aggressions, when or where shall we do it? But one alternative will remain—To bend our necks, to crouch beneath the tyrant, to submit without murmur to her insolence and injustice.

It is surprising to me to see this resoltion scouted by gentlemen, when this same measure has ever been considered as the most proper instrument with which to contend with G. Britain. If we look back to the times of the stamp act, we will see that this was then the opinion of the American people. Voluntarily associating themselves together, they cheerfully and unhesitatingly, as the means of obtaining redress, relinquished the luxuries, and even the necessaries of life drawn from G. Britain. These associations were voluntary, as from the situation of the colonies they could not