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IN SENATE.

EMBARGO DEBATE—CONTINUED.

NOVEMBER 24.

(Mr. Mitchill's speech concluded.)

Duties were laid upon papers, glass, and painter's colors, to be collected at the ports of entry in the colonies.—Public indignation was never more vehement. It was communicated with electrical speed, from one extremity of the empire to the other. It was resolved to defeat the stamp-act, by a refusal to buy its paper. All business was at a stand. Memorials and remonstrances were forwarded to the king and to the parliament. The discontent was so well grounded and so deeply fixed, that Hillsborough, the secretary of state for the colonies, trembled for the consequences. Resistance in the form of insurrection or rebellion, seemed inevitable, and to prevent the horrors of a civil war, the odious statute was repealed. The freemen of New-York were almost frantic with joy on this occasion; and they erected a superb statue to Chatham, for his exertions against the continuance of the law. Their countrymen from Kennebeck to Savannah, sympathized with them in their honest exertions.

The duties on the other articles were also repealed. But the Parliament adhering to the right of taxation, and determining to test the principle, reserved a small impost on tea to be collected in the colonies. All the resentment which the stamp act had excited, was revived on this occasion. Murmurs increased to uproar. To enforce the execution of this law, the officers of the British navy were commissioned to act also as officers of the revenue. To manifest their opposition the people refused to consume the tea. They carried their aversion so far that the tickets of the state lottery, a fourth part of which had usually been purchased in the colonies, remained unsold. They refused to import British merchandize. They established domestic manufactures. They destroyed the obnoxious drug on board the vessels which brought it. They defended their privileges against the naval and military force sent to subdue them. In short, they defended their holy cause; they expelled the enemy from their shores, and finally they achieved the independence of their country. If in the year 1768, our predecessors could declare a non-importation agreement, rather than submit to foreign taxation, what ought the present race of Americans to do in 1808, when menaced with similar exactions from abroad?

That the present case is stronger than that which preceded and induced the revolution, may be inferred from several considerations: The American governments were at that time dependent colonies; they are now independent states: the British Parliament had at least the color of right, to levy money upon them; they have now no legal pretext whatever: it was then alledged that the money raised on the colonies would be employed in their own protection and defence; but now there is not even a pretence of the kind; then the colonists looked to the king of that country as their proper sovereign and the source of all honor and power; now he is an alien to them, and the allegiance that once connected the prince and his subjects has been absolved by his own act. And yet money is demanded by that monarch, from this very people, for the privilege of navigating the ocean, and of carrying her merchandize to the continent of Europe!

Did the people of the U. S. authorise their public agents to consent to this? No. Have the President and Senate conceded the point by virtue of the treaty making power? No. Are the American people represented in the Parliament that authorised these arbitrary measures? They are not. Do they allow that they ought to be taxed where they are not represented? They do not. Is this high minded nation, prepared at the age of 35 years, to surrender its independence by submitting to domination at which the infant colonies revolted? I cannot believe it. Will they consent to pay duties on their exports, when required by a foreign government, while their own constitution expressly withholds such a power from Congress? I think not, by no means. But I shall be told that this is an external regulation, and has no possible connection with our internal and domestic concerns. Why really if this is the fact, I cannot but admire the [illegible] of British statesmen, forty years ago. The [illegible] of that day, conceived it necessary to collect the amount of duties, in the colonial ports where the goods were entered for consumption. The experiment cost them an empire, but it taught them an important lesson. They learned from it a more easy and effectual mode of taxation. This was to charge a duty on their own exports, and collect the money in their cities at home, and by the hands of their officers there. They have successfully followed this lucrative business ever since the expedient occurred to them. Such has been the avidity of the Americans to consume British manufactures, that they have always contributed largely to the ways and means of that government. It has been calculated upon as a sure and efficient fund. One may almost credit the declarations of certain British enthusiasts, who declare the loss of the colonies to have been a blessing, inasmuch as they were formerly very expensive, and paid no taxes, and at present contribute large sums of money, and are not chargeable at all. And with this tax, in addition to light money, quarantine fees, convoy duty, port charges, tonnage, keelage, and various other things that have not yet received names in the commercial nomenclature of America, has our commerce with Britain been constantly burthened. As, however, these were in reality regulations of a domestic and municipal nature, a compliance with them involved no dishonor. If our people voluntarily entered their ports, they were bound to obey their laws. But on the late occasion this arrogant power has gone a greater length. American citizens navigating the ocean, and lawfully pursuing their own business, are arrested on their voyage, and compelled as a condition of proceeding, to pay an impost for the cargo, or in other words to purchase a license to enable them to go to their place of destination, whether outward or homeward bound. What other expedients those political economists may have in reserve for raising further sums of money on our trade, I am not Oedipus enough to unriddle. As far, however, as I can comprehend the case before me, it is marked with stronger features than those which characterised the dawning revolution. I cannot suppose that any lues has corrupted, during the short period of their existence, the spirit and temper of the American people. The old whig temperament still survives unchanged, unadulterated. And he who has but a single drop of whiggish blood in his veins, will ever be ready to assert the good old principles, and maintain them inviolate. If I am deceived in this, I should not err materially in expressing my doubts whether the acquisition of independence is to be considered as a blessing. Upon principle therefore, the revolutionary patriots have set us a noble precedent. They carried their self denial to an absolute privation of intercourse. Is there firmness enough at the present crisis to carry such a law into operation? I know that at home and abroad, the most subtle measures are adopted to thwart us. For example, our non-importation law in forbidding Irish linens, was calculated to encourage the introduction of them from the Netherlands and Silesia. But the British ministry frame their orders to prohibit this, unless we pay duties to them, and thus purchase the privilege. Our embargo law rendered it unlawful for the collectors to give clearances to American vessels. Yet, to defeat this regulation, the British governors instantly open the W. India ports to all manner of persons that will run away without them. While our gun boats and cutters are watching the harbours and sounds of the Atlantic, a strange inversion of business ensues, and by a retrograde motion of all the interior machinery of the country, potash and lumber are launched upon the lakes, and Champlain and Ontario feel the bustle of illicit trade. And strange to tell, under the embargo system, the southern atmosphere has become so subject to gales and tempests from the north, that our poor coasters, who love to hug their native shores, are by distress of weather often driven to Cuba and Jamaica, and there forced (dire necessity!) to sell their cargoes to repair the damage they have sustained, and refit for a return to that land which they are longing and sickening to see.

If I have not erred in my reasoning, the embargo was correct in its principle, and would also be correct in its continuance under the increasing aggressions of the belligerent nations. But it is contended by the honorable mover (Mr. Hillhouse), of the resolution, that EXPERIENCE ought to govern us on this occasion; and thus I suppose the exception will be as broad as the rule. Let us examine the arguments in favor of this expediency.

We are told that the embargo, if continued, will ruin our commerce. The true operation of the embargo is to save our commerce from spoil and depredation of foreign powers. The notion that our own government is unfriendly to commerce is wholly unfounded. From commerce we derive the greatest part of our revenue. And to destroy that source of income would be to commit an act of political suicide. It would be killing the hen that lays the golden eggs. To every person who understands the history of our embarrassments, and knows how incessantly government has been laboring to protect, secure and improve the commerce of its citizens, such a declaration must appear wholly groundless. Why, sir, the existing quarrels are surely commercial; they are neither territorial nor genealogical. I am one of the warmest friends to American commerce, and always have been. I wish as heartily as any man all the prosperity to that useful occupation that it merits. No gentleman regrets more than myself that it has been harrassed so much by the parties at war. No one regretted more than I the imperious necessity under which they laid us, of employing an embargo. And I am anxiously looking for the time when, with safety to commerce, it may be removed. If a repeal of the embargo laws would restore our commerce to its former thrift, I would call for the question instantly, and give it my affirmative. But in the present state of the world, it will do no such thing. As soon as the restrictions are taken off, captures and condemnations will be renewed; and the rapacity of the spoilers, stimulated by avarice, as hunger is increased by abstinence, will be greedy to seize, and not easy to satiate. As to changing the commercial habits of our people, it is idle to attempt it; the disposition is already formed and it cannot be altered. This nation is not a new-born babe, whom we can mould and fashion as we please; but it may be compared to a sturdy youth, with habits that will never alter. Nor is this trading spirit peculiar to the seaports. It pervades the innermost recesses of the country, and delights as much in the purchase of lands and their produce as of ships and their cargoes. Such then being the turn and disposition of our people, it is as much out of the power of the government to eradicate their mercantile habits, even if it would, as it was impossible for the rulers of France to abolish the sabbath.

But it is urged that the embargo will deprive us of revenue. That it will lessen our income is certain. But we have ample resources in our treasury, to bear us along for a considerable time to come. The stagnating capital of commerce will partly be turned into land, and the purchasers of these national lands will pay the value into the treasury. There will be a large increase of revenue from this source. By the reduction of the public debt, under the present administration, thirty millions of dollars, there will be a saving of all the interest that was hitherto paid upon that portion of the principal. And with a discreet economy in our finance, we shall find enough to answer our current purposes. It must be owned indeed that the political atmosphere is cloudy. It would be no cause of surprize to me, that the gloom and darkness should increase and thicken around us. But if this should happen, the patriot heart ought not to be appalled. For my own part I never permitted myself to despair of the republic. The storm will pass away, and the cheering rays of the sun will beam upon us again.—Suppose, however, that the finances be deficient. The public faith is unimpaired. The national credit is unlimited. Lenders will present themselves in abundance, offering their money upon loan, on the most accommodating terms, like an individual whom losses and disappointments have reduced to the necessity of borrowing moderate sums to facilitate his business, this nation may employ a temporary accommodation in its pecuniary concerns, with benefit to the citizens and without disrepute to itself. Better times will arrive, and the sure and certain hope of this event will be allowed, upon moral, political, and even on christian principles, to be a firm ground of reliance. Again, it is urged on the side of expediency, that the surplus produce if kept at home under the embargo, will spoil upon our hands. Better sir to accumulate in our own barns and stores, than pass into the possession of enemies. By the bounty of providence our land has been productive beyond measure. Our citizens now revel in abundance of good things. For the plenty poured into the lap of their country, they are ungrateful to repine. They ought on the other hand to be thankful, and I trust they are so. For an accumulation, it is eminently desirable there should be an outlet. The demand for our provisions in foreign parts arises in a great degree from the occupation of men in pursuits different from the raising of articles for food; and our demand for articles of foreign growth or manufacture, proceeds from the employment of our people in the culture of such substances as are proper to support human life. The former class comprehends the eaters or consumers of provisions, who do not labor to rear them. To the latter belong the growers or cultivators who are directly engaged in procuring sustenance. The surplus produce of each of these classes is exchanged for the accommodation of the other. Now if the eating class should increase on our side of the Atlantic, consumption will be promoted just as well as if our provisions should be carried abroad, and the farmer will obtain purchasers in his country, who will pay him as good prices as foreigners; besides, it remains to be proved that the removal of the embargo would restore the safe transportation, the rapid sales, and the high receipts so vehemently desired. The ocean is infested by harpies, who will snatch the food from our mouths. Perishable cargoes will be lost to them under confiscation, or will spoil under detention. It is wholly a *petitio principii*, to say that a removal of the existing restrictions will diffuse an antiseptic virtue sufficient to keep flour and fish from decay. But the *auri sacra fames* burns with impatience, and in the lottery of trade, overlooks the adverse chances, and calculates with certainty on the possession of a prize; and if my estimates of the benefits were as extravagant as those of some gentlemen, I should join with them in the unconditional removal of the restraints. But even then, I should differ with them on one point; instead of clamouring against our own government, I should vent my indignation against the belligerents, the real authors of our distresses.

Supposing, however, that the class of persons who consume provisions without laboring directly to raise them, should increase in the United States, and thereby enlarge our domestic market, this very occurrence is made a subject of alarm, under a pretence that a systematic plan is in operation to annihilate commerce, and substitute manufactures in its place. This is one of the most idle whimsies that ever entered into the mind of a statesman. Reasoners often bewilder themselves by ideal or imaginary distinctions that have no foundation in nature; they make partitions in the intellectual regions, like the invisible or arbitrary lines of geometers, and not by the rivers and mountains, which distinguish the face of nature, and which every eye can discern. Commerce is to be sacrificed at the shrine of manufactures. It would be a pitiful commerce that could be carried on without manufactures. And I will offer as one of the unanswerable arguments against this fallacious reasoning, that *the ship*, without which commerce cannot be carried on, is a *domestic manufacture*. Our citizens have become proficients in this exquisite art, and I hope they will never forget their skill. The construction of the ship, in which our productions are to be carried to foreign markets, implies the existence of a cluster of manufacturers, and without their aid, the ship cannot be equipped for sea. A commercial state of society therefore presupposes the establishment of manufactures, and cannot be carried on without them. I hope the advocates of commerce will not proscribe the shipwright's handycraft, and for fear of promoting domestic manufactures, go beyond the seas to buy their vessels. The ship-manufacture is one of the arts that confers distinction and honor to America. I wish prosperity to the ship-builder, and to the rope-maker, and the joiner, and the rigger, and the painter, and the glazier, and the plumber, and the iron-founder, and the blacksmith, and the other laborers who work with him in this admirable manufacture, and my good wishes extend to him who shapes the spars and masts, prepares the tar and turpentine, forms the copper into bolts and sheets, and forms the hemp into cordage. In the furniture of a ship, too, Mr. President, are contained other manufactures, which do the highest honor to the hand and the head of man; the telescope, the quadrant, the chronometer, the compass, with gun-powder and artillery. And yet the gentleman from Connecticut is terribly afraid that manufactures will supplant commerce. While the ship continues to be the pride and boast of America, and of man, let no one decry manufactures; for without a constellation of auxiliar arts, that stupendous manufacture cannot exist. While on the subject of manufactures, I must do these states the justice to remark, that they are already become a great manufacturing country. The manufacturers in iron, from the gathering of the ore, through the operations of forging and refining, up to the casting of hollow ware, the preparation of nails, and the fabrication of cannon, are pursued with great success. Works in peltry and skins, such as leather, military accoutrements, saddlery, trunks, gloves, breeches, shoes, boots, harness-making, and book-binding, are carried on to wide extent. Preparations of wood in cabinet ware, furniture and carriages, are done in beautiful style. In woollen goods, the combination of industry, with skill, has passed from the family fire-side to public institutions. The brass founder, the copper-smith, the jeweller, and the wire-worker, have made distinguished progress in their respective arts. I pass over brewing, distillery, and a hundred other employments, that I may give credit to the Congress for the aid given to certain other branches of manufacture a few sessions ago. By an exemption of rags from the payment of duties, ample stock was provided for the paper mills, and an additional supply of the materials prepared for gazettes, pamphlets and books, so necessary to a free and well informed people. By a similar regulation in favor of Regulus of Antimony, the manufactory of types was favored, and such aid given to literature, that already the Greek and Latin classics appear in American print. The preparation of mill stones and flour, that staple of our country, was encouraged by permitting unwrought burrs to be imported from their quartzy strata in France, free from imposts. In like manner the admission of clay, cork, gypsum, bristles, hides, bullion, furs, wool, and many other articles, have worked beneficial effects upon our domestic manufactures. In this enumeration there is no mention of the manufactures which depress the character and prostrate the soul of man. I hope the degeneracy which accompanies the silk manufacture at Lyons, the cotton manufacture at Manchester, and the hard-ware manufacture at Birmingham and Sheffield, will never, never be seen in these abodes of liberty. Indeed, it is impossible it should, while industry is rewarded with the highest wages, and where land can be bought at a moderate price. That compact population where there are more mouths than food, and those statutes of apprenticeship and poor laws which tie up the hands of the subject, and almost deprives him of locomotion, are unknown among us. The miseries consequent upon an over-population, and upon the manufactures which grow out of that state of society, are as yet so far off, that centuries must pass away before they will overtake us.

The people moreover, it is contended, will not endure the embargo, and will, if it is not repealed, rise in open opposition to their government, by resisting it. Turbulent men may perhaps be found, who may make direct resistance to those statutes. But Mr. M. declared he had a better opinion of his countrymen than to suppose they would be concerned in insurrections. He was consoled by the reflection that American citizens were not only freemen, but trained to the profession & use of fire-arms as militiamen, accustomed to attend courts as jurors, called to decide differences as arbitrators, and privileged to vote as electors; they were besides instructed in the principles of civil liberty, moral order and religious discipline; they were connected with the ties of life, property, and social connexions; and they had also steady habits of respect to themselves, and the laws enacted by men of their own choice. Such a people will consider it as rarely the turpitude of resisting the lawful authority. The awful consequences of secession will be perfectly foreseen and avoided. A people worthy to enjoy freedom, will not be prone to riotous conduct; on the contrary, they will feel a strong co-operation of interest with duty, to prevent violence and disorder. The government which

(Continued on last page.)