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AMERICAN CONGRESS.

IN SENATE, Nov. 22.

Mr. WHITE'S SPEECH.

I WILL endeavor to shew that the operation of the embargo measure, upon the prosperity of the country has been such as now calls most imperiously upon this body to pass the resolution before us. The importance of this subject is admitted on all sides, and the anxiety known to exist throughout every section, and almost in every individual of the community, in relation to the decision now to be had upon it, is the fullest evidence of the deep and unusual degree of interest universally felt throughout the country, and attaches to the vote we are to give, the highest responsibility. Such a responsibility I am not willing to meet without assigning some of the reasons that influence my opinion.— And this I shall do the more cheerfully, as I know they will be in conformity with the sentiments of a vast portion of those I have the honor to represent. The embargo when laid was admitted to be a mere experiment, but one which we were admonished not to resist, as it was to do great things for the United States. It was in a few months to reduce the West-Indies to a state of starvation, and to bring the two great belligerent powers of Europe to our feet. In the prophetic language of the President, "it was to keep in safety our merchandize, our vessels and our seamen, these essential resources"; and we were told on all sides, by the numerous advocates of the measure that it would speedily bring the French and British governments to a sense of justice.—But has it, or is it likely to accomplish any of these desirable objects? I grant you, it has kept our merchandize in safety, if by that was intended to lock up in our barns and our store-houses, all the produce of our own country to rot upon our hands. And as to our dismantled ark-roofed vessels, they are indeed decaying in safety at our wharves, presenting daily to the merchant a melancholy memento of his present or approaching ruin, and forming a suitable monument to the memory of our departed commerce. But where are our seamen? Gone sir—driven into foreign exile in search of subsistence. The very measure that was to preserve them to their country has banished them from it, and many of them forever.— Even the vigilance and terrors of our gun-boat navy have not been sufficient to confine and starve them in our ports. But, sir, the most mortifying disappointment we have to sustain, is the total indifference with which this boasted measure of our administration has been treated by both the belligerents. Instead of coercing them to do us justice, we now know officially that it is neither felt, or thought of in France; and the British, so far from offering us terms on the subject, will not even ask us to take it off. Here I will beg leave to read a short passage from Mr. Canning's letter to Mr. Pinckney, of the 23d September last, shewing most distinctly the sense and determination of the British government on this subject.—"His Majesty (says Mr. Canning) sees nothing in the embargo laid on by the President of the United-States of America, which varies the original and simple state of the question. If considered as a measure of impartial hostility against both the belligerents, the embargo appears to his majesty to have been manifestly unjust, as according to every principle of justice that redress ought to have been first sought from the party originating the wrong; and his majesty cannot consent to buy off that hostility which America ought not to have extended to him, at the expence of a concession made not to America but to France. "If as it has been more generally represented by the government of the United States, the embargo is only to be considered as an innocent municipal regulation which affects none but the United States themselves, and with which no foreign State has any concern; viewed in this light, his majesty does not conceive that he has the right or the pretension to make any complaint of it; and he has made none. But in this light there appears not only no reciprocity, but no assignable relation between the repeal by the United States of a measure of voluntary self-restriction, and the surrender of his majesty of his right of retaliation against his enemies." Here the embargo, as a measure of coercion or retaliation on our part is officially treated by the

British minister even with ridicule; he tauntingly admits, what is unfortunately too true, that it is a regulation which affects none but the United States themselves; and tells us that his majesty neither does nor means to complain of it. And although the gentleman from Kentucky, informs us, he has not met with, yet I have seen a recent report made by a French minister to the emperor, in which the embargo is approved of and applauded, as what it really is, a measure favorable to them, and an act of great self denial on our part. Under all these circumstances, and every gentleman knows the fact I state to be correct, why in the name of Heaven continue it? What beneficial end can it produce? The country is at this moment bleeding from every pore under it, without the remotest prospect or probability of ultimately deriving the least possible advantage or security from the measure. And it is not among the least discouraging of the circumstances belonging to the present state of things, that we are able to make no calculation as to the probable time when we may see the end of the evil; for upon the same principle that the embargo is continued now, it may be continued for twenty years or for forty years, or at least during the war between the two great contending powers of Europe; which I presume, no gentleman here expects will be at an end in the life of the present emperor of France, and as long as an English man exists with the means and courage to defend the independence of his country.

I am willing to believe, and do believe what the honorable gentleman from Kentucky has just now in substance declared, that the gentlemen who supported the embargo laws at the last session upon this floor, supposed they would be speedily productive of great and beneficial results upon our foreign relations; that they would bring the two great belligerents, and especially England, to just and reasonable terms; and that there would be no occasion for continuing them longer, than until they could be known on the other side of the Atlantic. But in all this they now see and know their mistake; they now know from the most authentic sources, that these laws have produced no alteration either in the conduct of France or England in relation to us; that in fact they are applauded by one and treated with contempt and derision by the other, whilst we are ourselves the suffering and bleeding victims of the rack upon which we vainly expected to torture them.

It is the fate of humanity to err; the wisest and best of men are liable to it. And all we seek of these honorable gentlemen, now, is to come out openly, and acknowledge in the face of the nation, the egregious mistake into which they fell; and unite with us in redressing the injuries and healing the wounds they have so unnecessarily inflicted upon their devoted country. I make this appeal to them with the more confidence, because I know every gentleman here has too much character and patriotism to be influenced by the pride of opinion, to wish to persist in political error. I will submit to you, Mr. President, whether we have not before us sufficient evidence to shew that the administration themselves are now convinced of the impolicy of this measure, and would willingly get rid of it, if they could do so, consistently with the character of intallibility they wish to preserve in the public opinion. I deduce this conclusion from the offer they say they have recently made to the British government, to take off the embargo, as to them, and continue it against France, provided they should rescind their orders in council. An offer which, if made unincumbered with other terms, is a complete acknowledgment of a conviction of error on the part of the administration; because, after they had subjected the country to all the deprivations and ruinous effects of the embargo for more than six months, it was coming to the precise ground we were requested to take in relation to France, by the British government a year before the embargo was laid, in the famous note of Lords Holland and Auckland, to Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, accompanying the British treaty formed by these gentlemen. All they then asked of us, was that we should "not acquiesce in the palpable violations of our rights, directed by the Berlin decree, if attempted to be enforced;" but surely they have not contemplated more, than if France did attempt to enforce that decree, we would interdict all inter-

course with her, and continue our commerce with Great-Britain: which would be the effect of the stipulation recently proposed. This proposition from the British government, however, in December, 1806, was spurned with disdain: and now when the country is half ruined with the experiment of a perpetual embargo, such as I believe was never before practised upon any people, we condescend to beg those very terms, they refused to grant them. Sir, the truth is, the administration must now be convinced that the embargo is injuring none but ourselves, and us it must eventually ruin if persisted in: I regret too, this proposition as made, because it has furnished to Mr. Canning an opportunity of offering a most farcallec insult to the government of this country. He tells Mr. Pinckney, in reply to it, "that his majesty would not hesitate to contribute in any manner in his power to restore to the commerce of the United States its wonted activity; and if it were possible to make any sacrifice for the repeal of the embargo, without appearing to deprecate it as a measure of hostility, he would gladly have facilitated its removal as a measure of inconvenient restriction upon the American people." I have no faith, Mr. President, in the security of this profession; but I feel most sensibly the severity of the sarcasm, as applied to a measure of our own administration, that we were confidently told was to bring England to our own terms.

I will now, Sir, with the indulgence of the senate, endeavor to examine, as concisely and as correctly as I am capable of the operation of the embargo upon the commerce and general prosperity of the United States. According to the last report of the secretary of the treasury, it will be found that the goods, wares and merchandize of foreign growth and manufacture, exported from the United-States in the year prior to the first day of October, 1807, amounted in dollars to 59,643,558. All the revenue, all the national and commercial wealth that would have arisen from this very extensive trade, is completely destroyed by the embargo; it is a total loss to the country that can never be recovered. In the same report, it appears that the goods, wares and merchandize, of domestic growth and manufacture, the actual produce of our own country, exported from the United States in the same year amounted in dollars to 48,699,592. The whole commercial profits and national wealth that would have arisen from the exportation and proceeds of this immensely valuable produce, is for the present lost to the country, and a large portion of the merchandize, the produce itself must be forever lost if the embargo be long continued. All, or nearly all the product of the fisheries, amounting in dollars to 2,804,000, as likely the agricultural produce of the country, a few articles, such as tobacco, cotton, rice, &c. &c. excepted, which I have not included in this estimate amounting in dollars to 18,621,000, making in the whole twenty-one million four hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, that must be forever lost to the fishermen, the farmer, and the merchant, because they are articles of a perishable kind, such as fish, wheat, flour, indian-meal, flaxseed, pork, beef, &c. that will not admit of being kept on hand for a market. So that if the embargo be now continued, the country in fact may be said already to have sustained a clear loss, in her native produce only, of more than twenty-one million of dollars by the measure; besides the duties that would have arisen from near a million and half of tonnage now idle in our docks—and the immense expence of large detachments of militia, regular troops and a fleet of gun-boats to enforce the laws. And so obnoxious are those laws that although to enforce their execution we have blockaded our own ports, and hung our citizens, they are still openly resisted by force, and seriously endanger the domestic tranquillity of the country. But sir, it is to be observed, that the actual loss sustained during the embargo, is not the only evil arising from it; another more permanent is to be apprehended. It will have the effect of throwing the commerce of the world into other, and different channels; of inducing foreign nations to seek in other countries what they have heretofore been in the habit of purchasing of us, and what we now deny them. In the single article of cotton, for instance

(For the remainder, see last page.)