

Debates in Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THURSDAY, December 10.

Mr. Nicholson's Speech on the Appropriation for GUNBOATS.

The system was objected to yesterday, because it did not provide for the protection of commerce. The bill showed for itself that that was not its object. It was now objected that it was inadequate to the object in view, the protection of the coast. Had it ever been said they were? He had never heard such an assertion. He would scout such an idea. Was there a man in the nation who believed the representatives so lost as to rest the defence of the nation on gunboats?

The gentleman from Connecticut had acknowledged that they would form a valuable part of a system of defence. But there had been an attempt to make it local. Was it so? If he was of that opinion he would certainly vote against it. An attempt had also been made to prevent the expression of the gentleman from North Carolina, who had designated the northern as an honorable part of the union. The fact was that that portion of the union was honorable, and ought so to be spoken of.

Were the observations which he had heard made, that gun boats and ships of war ought to act together, and provided at the same time, serious? Gun boats could be supplied instantly. Ships of war required expenditures of large sums of money and a long period of time to prepare them.

In the harbor of Boston gun boats could give as effectual protection as in other places. He did not understand the gentleman from New York, who, so much to their honor, had paid such strict attention to this bill, to say, that they did not wish for gun boats in the harbor of New-York. He merely understood them to say, that they did not think them sufficient without other modes of defence.

Much had been said of the opinion of the president—that this measure was a mere executive whim, ready cut and dry for congress, and they had nothing to do but to provide the number of gun boats required. Were that the case, it would soon be rung through the union that they were a mere set of scribblers called together to register the presidential edicts.

It was of peculiar importance that some thing should be done in the present state of the nation. The constitution had placed the power of making war in congress.

When they exercised that power, would they not also exercise the power of carrying on war? They certainly would. The gentleman from Connecticut had said, that as the president had asked for no other means of defence, the house ought to give him this. He had examined the message and could not find any more particular recommendation of that than of other modes of defence.

The gentleman from Connecticut had made another observation, which would have been perhaps, as well omitted. He had said that no dispatches relative to the affair between the Chesapeake and Leopard had been laid before the house. [Mr. Dana. Those were not my words. I said that this house were not in possession of any dispatches on that subject.] Mr. N. had misunderstood the gentleman's expression; but the dispatches in possession of the executive, from the beginning to the latest period of the negotiation, had been before the house.

Mr. Thomas observed, that the gentleman from Connecticut, in saying that gun boats were the only measure recommended by the executive, alluded to his message at the last session. He wished that message to be read, as it would show the assertion of the gentleman from Connecticut to be erroneous, and would serve to refute many of the gentleman's arguments.

The message was read.

Mr. Randolph hoped the house would not decide on the question without understanding it. He had been waiting with impatience for some information on the subject, but was no wiser than on his arrival at the house. He hoped before the question was put, some gentleman would inform the house how much the expenses arising out of the bill then on the table, would diminish those of the naval establishment.

Mr. Burwell observed, that as his colleague had asked for information, he would with candor explain his views on the subject. In case of a contest with Great-Britain, he thought it would be in vain to attempt to defend our commerce on the high seas. If all Europe were unable to do this, how could the United States effect it? His policy would be, in case of a war with Great Britain, to defend the property in the towns and cities, and should the British land troops in the United States to be prepared to repel them. If a war should take place, the resources of the country, arising from imposts, would be cut up, and at the time they would be demanded, it would be found impossible to collect taxes. How then think of engaging in a contest of that sort, in which we would be sure to be the losers?

He had no hesitation in declaring it as his opinion, that we were totally incapable of combating with England on the ocean. This country had not the necessary resources. It must rely on the effect produced in England by the want of its commerce, and on taking possession of its valuable possessions in its neighborhood.

Gentlemen seemed anxious for large vessels for the protection of the ports and harbors of the U. S. Suppose (said he) that there were four 44's, or even a greater number, lying in the harbor of New York, what would prevent the British from laying any other town of the sea board under contribution? Any naval force the U. S. could build would be useless, so long as England could bring a greater naval force against them. Gunboats were more useful, because they could be moved from point to point, as necessity required.

Every one appeared to be impressed with the necessity of this kind of defence to a certain extent. This so far was an evidence that it was a proper mode of defence. He thought it the best mode at present practicable. He thought too the number provided for by the bill the proper number; for that number, together with those already on hand, were thought adequate, with the aid of land batteries, to the defence of our most important towns.

He was not acquainted with the origin of gunboats, but he believed all the nations of

Europe were in the habit of using them.—England herself had upwards of 300 of them, and they had been highly recommended by naval officers of the United States. One reason why he wished to confine them in their operation to the defence of towns was, that he thought them adequate to that defence. But if it was attempted to drive Great Britain from the ocean, it would be found in vain the whole United States, sold at auction, supposing there were persons willing and able to purchase, would not defray the expense of such an experiment.

The expense of gun boats, according to the estimate of the secretary of the navy, appeared great; but he had no doubt it would be reduced, when greater experience had been gained in building them. The present boats were sea vessels. He was an enemy to that construction—they were unnecessarily large. They would hereafter be built on a smaller scale, as they would not be wanted for sea voyages.

As to the expense of keeping gun boats in service, he thought 11,000 dollars per annum entirely too much, and he would never vote for it. But the committee thought it practicable to devise some plan of arming these boats in a short time from the neighboring population. At Norfolk, 60 boats were to be stationed. It would be easy to draw from the population of that place, and its neighborhood, a sufficient number to man them, and so in other places. With respect to the apportionment of the gun boats to the several points mentioned, it was not intended to be permanent. They could be removed at pleasure to where most wanted.

The gentleman appeared to place great reliance on large ships for the protection of ports and harbors. They did not appear to have answered that purpose at Copenhagen; nor did they appear to have been of more service at Havana. At Havana, in 1762, the British took twelve sail of the line from the Spaniards, though they were protected by one of the strongest batteries in the world. He believed that the want of ships had saved the country from war, and he wished it not to have them.

The gentleman from Connecticut had acknowledged that some gun boats were necessary, but said they were the only mode of defence proposed. The gentleman was surely aware that there were a number of other propositions for defence before the house—for erecting fortifications, for raising troops—for arming the militia &c. With this knowledge how could the gentleman make such an observation?

Upon the whole, it was to him a matter of doubt whether or not the number was sufficient. If he thought them more than sufficient, he would vote against the bill. If he thought them altogether useless he would vote against it; or if gentlemen would bring forward some more eligible mode of defence, he would support it. He had no prejudices in favor of any particular plan. His object was to place the country in a state of defence, that it might not be unprepared should an enemy appear.

Mr. Van Dyke would not have troubled the house with any observations on the present question, but that the eyes and noses had been called for. He had to confess that he felt much embarrassment on the subject.—He had listened with much attention & patience for information to enable him to discharge his duty; but after exhausting his patience, he would be obliged to give his vote without that information he was so solicitous to obtain. He had hoped to discover, whether it was the decided wish of the executive that the number of gun boats proposed in the bill should be built. He had looked, with that view into the message of the president, but in that part which related to gun boats he could find no positive expression of opinion. After stating where the number already built were stationed, he proceeded—"Whether our movable force on the water ought to be increased in this or any other form, is left to the wisdom of the legislature to determine."—In another part of the message the same kind of expression was used—"Whether the regular army ought to be increased, and to what number, must depend on that information so shortly to be expected." In neither of these instances was there any recommendation to congress, or any indication of the executive wishes. It might not be improper here to remark, that as dispatches had been received by government, he had hoped, before he gave his final vote on this question, to have ascertained the opinion of the executive on the subject. Some gentlemen to whom the avenues of information were more open than they were to him, might be informed on this point, but it was one on which he remained ignorant. Perhaps, however, he would not be wrong in voting for it as an executive measure, when he discovered honorable gentlemen advocating it who might be looked up to as the possessors of correct information from that quarter.

They had been told by some gentlemen, that the country was on the eve of a war by others, that it was actually in war. What then supposing either situation, was to be done? Were the house to sit there idle, until the president should go and tell them to adopt the proposed measure; or were they to take it up on their own view of the subject? He preferred the latter course. Some mode of defence must be adopted. Several propositions, for this in the shape of resolutions were before the house. If this was considered the best mode he could not withhold his assent from it. Not considering it as an executive measure in so great an extent as contended for by some gentlemen, he still considered it as an executive measure in a certain degree. It was merely considered as an auxiliary mode of defence, as it ought to be, to co-operate with other means, he would rejoice that he had given his vote in favor of it.

Mr. Randolph, before the question was taken wished to be indulged in stating some of those reasons which compelled, not induced him to vote against the passage of the bill. He could have wished that the question which he had propounded, had been answered. That question was, to what extent would the expenses arising out of the bill on the table, diminish the ordinary expenses of the navy department.

[Debate to be continued.]

BOSTON, December 21.

Arrived, brig Minerva, Cleveland, of Bath, from Portsmouth England, salt. Left Nov. 0. ship Medford, Barnett of Boston; ship Gen. Eaton, of Portsmouth, detained; captain Hodge, in a Newburyport ship; captain Williams of New-Orleans; Venus, Bond, Boston, 0 days; Lydia, Richmond, Spoke, December 3, lat. 41, 15, brig Harriot, Leach, 5 days from Salem, for Leghorn. Dec. 14 lat. 42, 35, barque Active, Richardson, 48 hours from Salem, for Malaga.

The ship Sophia Magdalena, arrived at the Vineyard, on Thursday last, in 11 days from Cape Francois.

The ship Charlotte, of Providence, from Amsterdam, taken into Yarmouth England, and cleared, drove out of the Roads in a gale and put into Harwich, with the loss of cable and anchor.

At Holmes Hole, Vineyard, on Monday, noon—Ship Monk, Lendal, for Salem; brig Agnes, from Boston, for Philadelphia; schooner Regulator, Norton, from do. to do.; schooner Mary Ann, from do. to Richmond; schooner Thomas Jefferson, of Duxbury, from do. to Baltimore; brig Richmond from St. Thomas for Portsmouth; Capt. Bangs in a schooner from Baltimore, for Boston; and a brig for Castine. In addition to the above list, 18 sail came over the shoals on Saturday last, bound to Northern and Eastern Ports.

Arrived, Lark, Crosby, Richmond.

Cleared, Regulator, Cochran, Middle-town; Industry, Hilton, Wiscasset; Charlotte, Plymouth; Good Intent, Baxter, Alexandria; James, Reynolds, Philadelphia; Dolphin, Johnson, Portland; Traveller, Snow, Richmond. Ship Dromo, Woodward, N. W. coast of America and China; Sally Anne, Glover, Cagliari; snow Pallas, Rice, Havana; scho. Hannah Matilda, Harris, Havana; Brisk, Smith, Halifax.

An article from Petersburg, states the amount of the Russian Navy to be in the Baltic, 20 new ships of the line, 12 old ones, 14 frigates, and 25 smaller vessels; in the Black sea 12 sail of the line and 4 frigates, besides galleys and gun boats.

From Hamburg, Oct. 24, we learn, that several American vessels had arrived at the mouth of the Elb with colonial produce, but had not sailed up to Hamburg, not being furnished with a magistrate's certificate from their loading place, testified by a French agent.

At Demerary, Nov. 2d, lumber 7 joes; pork 5 do; beef 3 d.; fish 4 to 4½ stivers lb.; other articles generally good.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 23.

ARRIVED.

Brig Orient, Jenny, from Rotterdam, via Newport, gin, &c.

Schr. Henry Dennison, Alder, 5 days from Charleston, cotton and rice. Left, brig Speake, for New-York, uncertain.

Schr. Friendship, Arvel, of New-Haven, 5 days from Charleston, in ballast. The brig Betsey and Polly, sailed same day for New-York. Dec. 22, lat. 33, long. 79, spoke ship Golden Rule, from Liverpool for Norfolk.

Schr. Gloria, Godby, from Antigua, via R. I. rum. In lat. 21, sloop Nancy, of Bristol, 6 days from Guadeloupe for Baltimore.

Schr. Mary, Edwards, 15 days from Boston, plaster paris, and hides.

Cleared, ship Lydia, Taylor, London; Two Marys, Riley, Nants; Adams, Moore, Savannah; Union, Pigot, Liverpool; brig Delight, Pierce, Cayenne; schr. John, Wallace, Alexandria; sloop Three Sisters, Murphy, Philadelphia.

December 24.

Arrived, ship Sarah and Eliza, Stewart, 40 days from Liverpool, salt, coal, steel dry goods. Dec. 1 lat. 39, 38, long. 57, 25, spoke ship Eliza, Skeddy, 3 days from New-York for Bordeaux.

Ship William and Mary, Clifton, 53 days from St. Ubes, salt. Left, brig Sea-Flower, of Newburyport. Sailed in co. ship Alpheus, of Warren, for New-York; ship William Ham, 11 days from Boston, salt and coal.

Brig Camillus, Kennedy, 13 days from Havana, sugar, hides, molasses and logwood.

Brig Susan, Moffat, 13 days from Havana, sugar. Off Cape Florida, Dec. 13, spoke brig Angenor, 7 days from N. Orleans for Baltimore. Left brig Eliza, Grey, of New-York, 16 days from Philadelphia, and a yellow sided brig 19 days from Portland. The brig Aurora, Lambert, was to sail in 10 days for New-York. A pilot boat schr. from New-York for New-Orleans, had just arrived, and reported that the American ports were all blockaded by the British!!

Schr. Saba, Fash, of Boston, 13 days from Havana, sugar, fruit, tortoise shell and logwood. Left brig Aurora, for New-York, in 7 days; schr. Atlantic, for do. in 3 days; and schr. Monongahela Farmer, for ditto. Dec. 19, in the lat. of Charleston, spoke brig Charming Peggy (which sailed 2 days before him for Newport) was leaky, steering for Charleston or Savannah; same day, spoke brig Pallas, Mason, from Havana for New-York.

Schr. Antelope, Smith, 10 days from Norfolk, flour and wheat.

Schr. Neptune, Bell, 19 days from Bonaire, salt.

Below last night, ship Le Roy, Gillies, 68 days from Tomnington, and 92 from the Downs.

And one other ship.

Cleared, ship Susan, Delano, Belfast; Uncle Toby, Parr, Lisbon; Swift, Smith, L.

verpool; Manchester, Bunker, Havana; Factor, Reynolds, Norfolk; Ann, Flower, London; brig Regulator, Lawrence, Antigua; Achilles, Bea, Trinidad; Eliza, Kischian, Havana; Rajah, Thompson, Demerara; Sally, Ranson, Washington, N. C.; schr. Mary, Griswold, Martinique; Ann, Syms, St. Croix; Harmony, Owens, Philadelphia; William Hall, Duncan, Beaufort; Phillip, Williams, Philadelphia; sloop President, Phillips, Winton, N. C.; Lydia, Norton, N. Bedford; Maria, Comstock, Providence; First Consul, Robinson, Nantucket.

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 24.

No arrivals at this port yesterday.

Cleared, ship Brutus, Craig, London-derry; Sally, Gaddes, Newry; Mechanic, Ray, Sligo; brig Clie, Reneygan, Havana; H. H. Billows, Point P. tre; schr. Mary, Hall, Jamaica; Happy Return, Tatem, Antigua; C. concord, Nelson, Petersburg, Va; sloop Hope, Trefethen, Norfolk.

December 25.

Arrived, schr. Regulator, Norton, Boston 7 days.

Cleared, brig Hetty, Bellows, Charleston; Cyrus, Morgan, Savannah; Fox, Dagget, Boston; schr. Plughboy, William, N. York; Ruba, Sawyer, Portland; British schr. William, Earnest, Lauenberg N. S.; sloop Morning Star, Donnelly, Charleston; Julia, Savage, New-York.

Brig Casimer, Pinner, from Senegal, is below.

[Per the Henry Dennison.]

CHARLESTON, December 14 to 16.

Arrived, ships A. E. I. Liverpool 59 days; Farmer, Lunt, Petersburg via the Downs; Agent, Campbell, Mozambique, 85; Julia Ann, Torry, St. Jago 12.—Brigs Venus, Preble, Isle de Los 52; Lioness, Wilson, St. Domingo, 31; James, Fairchild, P. Peter 10; Nancy, Liverpool, 52; schr. Industry, Chesborough, Exama, 11; Iris, Story, Havana, 9; Enterpriz, Yellowly, Nasau; sloop Vigilant, Da Cavada, St. Jago, 20; Apollo, Weston, Duxbury, 18.

Cleared, ships Agnes, Bance, Philadelphia; Henrietta Charlotte, Sherry, Liverpool; Carolina Ann, Hutchinson, do.—Brigs Betsey & Polly, Phillips, New-Orleans; schr. Thomas Jefferson, Watt, Nasau. The French privateer sloop Trop, Tard of Guadonpe, has put in here in distress. Capt. M. Lean, of the brig Sarah, of New-York, is passenger in the Enterpriz, his vessel lost at Eutheura.

Extract of a letter from L'Orient, Nov. 20.

Business for the last 12 months has been not only dull, but ruinous, until within about four weeks, when a gradual rise took place; from the opinion generally entertained that a war between the U. States and England must infallibly break out, and sales were effected in consequence at advanced prices and the last at enormous rates; the demand, however, was of short duration & ceased immediately on the appearance of King George's proclamation of October 18, because all fears of a rupture immediately subsided. This act is regarded by every body here, as a most humiliating concession on his part towards the government of the U. States, and it is expected prices will decline as rapidly as they had risen.

"Washington, Dec. 19th, 1807.

"DEAR SIR,
Yesterday we received a message from the President of a confidential nature. We immediately closed our doors, and they are still closed. Of course I am not permitted to inform you either what the President has communicated to us, or what we have done in consequence of it. But I may be permitted to tell you we are doing no good. I fear we are about to plunge the nation into the most dreadful calamities—unnecessarily and wantonly. I am now more than ever persuaded that there is but too much FRENCH INFLUENCE. And it is well that those who succumb to it, should act in secret. This is the reason, and I pledge myself to you, almost the only reason why we sit with closed doors. Our deliberations no more require secrecy at this moment, than they did when we were debating on the subject of fortifications. Nay, sir we are in my opinion, violating the great rights of the people, by sitting at this moment with closed doors. I cannot express to you in terms sufficiently strong, my abhorrence of what we are doing, and the manner in which we are doing it."
[N. Y. E. Post.]

We have this moment seen a letter from an intelligent gentleman, of which the following is a copy:

[Philadelphia Register.]

"WASHINGTON, Dec. 22. The bill laying an embargo, has passed into a law. You may be assured it results from the state of our affairs with France, as disclosed in general Armstrong's last dispatches."

To the Citizens of Philadelphia.

From late information from the Westward, it appears, that the commissioners for laying out the road, from Fort Cumberland, to the Ohio river, are determined to go on through Washington county, agreeably to their first report, without condescending to examine whether the route pointed out to them by our legislature, during their last session, would answer or not.

If this great national road, connecting the eastern and western waters, should be completed on the ground first reported, it will be the most fatal stroke the interest of this city has got, since the first white man set foot on Pennsylvania. It is as completely calculated to carry the whole trade of the south western states, into Baltimore, as any road could possibly be.

New-York must, and will, be the market of the north-western parts of the U. S. Nature has placed her without a competitor for this trade, on account of her inland navigation. A single glance at United States map, will clearly demonstrate the truth of this observation.

Now, in the name of common sense, where is the trade of this city to come from? You are shut out on all sides; and look out with the greatest indifference, at your interest falling a sacrifice to your neighboring cities. It is to be hoped that you will not suffer this charge to be any longer made against you with justice; and that you will immediately instruct your representatives, in the legislature of this state, to take such steps, as they may judge best calculated to cause the we tern end of the United States road to come as far north as possible, so as not to hinder the progress of that road, or mar the views of the general government in first making the law. The friends of the northern route pledge themselves to show much better ground, and shorten the distance between the two points, and of course produce a considerable saving to the United States in the first cost of the road. I again repeat, that unless something decisive is done and that speedily too, the interest of this city, and not only this city, but of this state, will be immediately injured. This must and will happen as sure as any event follows its natural cause.

The road as reported by the commissioners will be near fifty miles from any part of the state turnpike to Pittsburg; when by taking it on better ground, & a shorter distance, it would bring it within about 22 miles of the state road, and very near the latitude of this city.

A. PENNSYLVANIAN.

NORFOLK, Dec. 19.

Arrived, schr. Resolution, West, 11 days from Nantucket, salt & fish; Friend-ship, Walker, 12 days from East Greenwich; Deborah, Spencer, 14 from R. Island.

In distress, the schr. Lucretia, Torrence, from Guadeloupe to Newburn. (N. C.) sugar and molasses. Left there on the 18th ult. the ship Northern Liberties, Chew, of and for N. York in 10 days; schr. Sidney, Crispine, of and for Newbern, in 10 days; brig George Washington, Boston, of and for N. York in 20. On the 22d Nov. in lat. 16, 43, long 42, was boarded by a small picaroon under English colours, of about three tons, 11 men and one, 1 pound swivel, who made prize of us and put a prize-master on board and ordered us for Nevis; previous to this they had captured the sloop Sally, capt. Bradford, from Guadeloupe bound to Baltimore; after being in possession about 24 hours we perceived the sloop trying to make her escape and the privateer in chase, thinking this a favorable opportunity, we made the best of our way off with our good friend the prize-master, who is a Spaniard!

Sch. Commerce, Gardner, 14 days from St. Ann's, Jamaica—sugars. On the 8th inst. in lat. 27, 30, long. 62, 30, spoke the sloop Julian, of Providence, R. I. from Vera Cruz, blown out, bound to Baltimore, 7 days out.

Sch. Victoria, Pridell, 17 days from Antigua—rum. Left there on the 1st instant, brig Flora, Benthall, of and for this port in 2 days.—Sch. Little Joseph, Fairweather, of Bridport for Turk's Island in 2 days. On the 5th inst. in lat. 22, long. 63, spoke the sch. Ann, of Foily Landing, for Martinique bound home, out 5 days.

The pilot who carried out the French ship L'Patriot, left her about six leagues at sea on Wednesday afternoon. Thus have two ships which the British have blockaded for nearly sixteen months, made their escape.

The British squadron have certainly quitted our waters, and which we believe was in consequence of recent instructions from England, it having been signified to the British government, that their remaining here was highly and (after the president's proclamation) justly offensive to this government.

The Patriot carried off two seamen belonging to the service of the U. States, which had deserted and went on board that ship, and with the perfect knowledge of the French officers. These men it is true were Frenchmen, but according to the American principle, having become citizens of the U. States, and actually in their service, they were to be considered as American citizens.

Is there any man mad enough to say, that we ought to quarrel about these men? The French commander having regained his men, not by force, was justified in retaining them against the claims of this country. We were the original wrong doers.

The case of the other seamen is differently circumstanced, for in that instance there was an open attempt to take the men from under the authority of his officer, by a positive refusal to deliver him up when demanded, and this within our own jurisdiction.

[Norfolk Ledger.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.

THE SECRET SESSION.

FRIDAY, December 18.

A message in writing was received from the president of the United States, as follows:

[See message and documents in our last.]
On motion of Mr. Holland and seconded by Mr. Clay.

The said message and documents accompanying it were severally read.

Ordered, That the letters referred to in said message be returned to the president of the United States, agreeably to his request.

On motion of Mr. Randolph, and seconded; that the house do come to the following resolution:

"Resolved, That an embargo be laid on all shipping, the property of citizens of the United States now in port or which shall hereafter arrive."

And the question being put that the house do agree to the said resolution, and on the question thereupon, the Yeas and Nays being demanded by one fifth of the members present, and debate arising, a motion