sideration of some consequence to a minister to that government. That altho' Mr Barlow would be a most improper minister to be sent to the Court of London; yet he possessed so many qualities suited to that of Paris; and it being probable that he was as fit, and indeed more fit than any other person whom the President would nominate; Mr Pickering was at present disposed to vote in favour of the nomination.

In answer to the objection that Mr Barlow was destitute of mercantile knowledge, & therefore not qualified to make and enforce the claims for restitution of American property which had been seized and sequestered by the French Emperor, Mr Pickering remarked, — that if the objection were founded, he really thought this a matter of little consequence; because there was no ground on which to expect that even one cent would ever be restored. The French Emperor took and held that property as a pledge that our government would conform to his views in respect to Great Britain. But Mr Pickering considered the measure now agitated in the other House to be so far from a compliance with the Emperor's expectations, that if it should be adopted, he would make it a cause for confiscating the whole of the American property at once. We know, too, that if Bonaparte is not furnished with a pretense, he can easily fabricate one. Witness his making the non-intercourse law a ground for seizing and confiscating American vessels and cargoes, on the principle of retaliation for the confiscation of French vessels in the ports of the United States — when not one such vessel had been touched. We should also recollect the information given by General Armstrong two years ago, respecting the neutral property seized and then under sequestration in France, amounting to twenty millions of livres, — that the very magnitude of the sum was a decisive reason why the Emperor would never release it. But the American property now in his hands, amounted to a much larger sum — probably to twenty millions of dollars; which proportionably strengthened his motives never to let it go.

MdHS 1974 [1150-1344]