

CONGRESS.

House of Representatives.

January 14.

In committee of the whole, on the report of the Secretary of State, relative to the commercial intercourse of this country, with foreign nations.

Sketch of Mr. Madison's observations in reply to Mr. Smith.

Mr. Madison said, he had hoped that the gentleman up yesterday, would to-day have favored the committee with those arguments which the late hour yesterday, prevented him from bringing forward; however, as this did not appear his intention, he rose to make some remarks on the very important subject, now before the Legislature.

The subject before the committee, he acknowledged, is of a commercial nature; however, it will not be possible, he conceived, to do justice to it and to the interests of the United States without making some allusions to politics. The question as it at first presents itself is of a general nature; the committee are to determine how far it is the interest of this country, by commercial regulations, to vary the state of commerce now existing. He declared himself a friend to free trade, and gave it as his opinion, that it would be of general advantage if, all commerce was free; but to this rule there are, he conceived, exceptions. He instanced the navigation act of Great Britain as a proof of the effect of one exception on the prosperity of national commerce. This act, before the present revolution of France, when it produced its full effect, and because it was not counter-balanced by any similar acts on the part of rival nations, gave to Great Britain eleven twelfths of the shipping employed in her trade. The rapidity with which it produced its effects was not less remarkable, he said, than the extent of those effects.

The act passed in 1660; the foreign tonnage then employed in the British trade was to the British tonnage as one to four, in 1719 it was reduced to as one to nine; in 1750 it was as one to twelve, and in 1774, it was reduced to less than as one to twelve. There is another exception to the advantages of a free trade, where the situation of the country is such with respect to another, that by duties on the commodities of that other it shall, not only invigorate its own means of rivalry, but draw from that country the hands employed in the production of those commodities. When an effect like this can be produced it is so much clear gain, and is consistent with the general theory of national rights. What has been and ever will be the effect of leaving our commerce altogether to regulate itself? It is to submit it to be regulated by other nations. Suppose, that this country had a commercial intercourse with one nation only, and that we should admit of a free trade, and that nation proceeded on a monopolizing system, would not that nation enjoy all the carrying trade, and with it the maritime strength it confers be heaped upon a rival? Then just in the same proportion to the freedom we grant to the vessels of other nations with us, and to the burdens other nations impose on ours, with them will be the transfer of those maritime resources.

It had been remarked that this subject is not novel. It is as old as our nation, it has been discussed from our political birth, and it has exercised the thoughts and attention of reflecting persons ever since. In 1784 the States, at the recommendation of Congress, granted for a limited time certain powers to Congress, for the regulation of our common commercial interests; but this was found ineffectual. The States then, endeavored to attain this desirable object by concurrent regulations, which originated with Massachusetts, but ineffectually also. Out of this experience rose the measures that terminated in the existing establishment, with a view to some permanent regulations and the vindication of our commercial rights. This was no more an object of the establishment of the present government by the people than it was their firm belief that some regulations on this head would be one of the first fruits of its operations. An attempt was one of the first fruits of those operations in the House, but this first experiment expired in the Senate, and there it fell, not from a dislike to the principle, but because a better mode, it was thought, could be devised than that proposed.

It was also urged, when the question

was first agitated, at New-York, that such regulations then would not be well timed, considering that the execution of the treaty with Great Britain was yet depending, and that negotiations for a treaty of commerce might soon be expected to be opened. It was thought by some, wise to wait the event of those negotiations, that then the Legislature might proceed on firmer ground, and act more unanimously. We have waited; the treaty is not executed, and we may infer from the communications of the executive that there is no negotiations depending that should stop us. We have tried to bring about such a negotiation, and we have failed; we have gained nothing from those nations with whom we have no treaty, and if we have been favored by one with whom we have a treaty, it is no doubt upon the idea that the policy we at present pursue is but of a temporary nature. Having seen the end of what was then pending, we are surely now free to take such measures as a regard to our interest may dictate, and if we find that the state of our commerce does not comport with that interest we are free, and bound to vary it so as to make it contribute to our welfare.

The propositions before the committee should be examined as they concern our navigation, our manufactures and the just principles of discrimination that ought to prevail in our policy to nations having treaties and not having treaties with us.

With respect to navigation it was conceded even by the gentleman up yesterday that our navigation is not upon the same footing by the regulations of the two nations with whom we have the greatest commercial intercourse. With respect to G. Britain, while they carry their own, or any other produce to any of our ports and take our own productions and that only to part of her dominions; in her West Indies our vessels are entirely excluded. The gentleman from South Carolina, viewed this part of the subject in a different point of light than it struck him, he said. He (Mr. Smith) considered it as a favour that our produce should be admitted in the British islands, when the same articles of the produce of other countries is positively excluded. This exclusion, he answered is merely a matter of form, it is of no consequence as this is the only country that can supply those articles; it is a prohibition that exists only upon paper but is never called into exercise.

To exhibit at a glance the effect of the British navigation act on our navigation it is sufficient to compare the quantity of American and British tonnage employed in our intercourse with Great Britain; the former, in 1790, amounted to 43,000 tons while the latter was 211,000 tons.—A change owing to a particular change of circumstances has taken place since that period in favor of the American; but the proportion in that year, as less influenced by accident, may with more propriety be taken for data. Further to shew the effect of British policy he compared the proportions of the domestic tonnage employed in our intercourse with other European nations, at that period. With Spain the American was to the Spanish as 5 to 1; with Portugal 6, 1; Netherlands 15, 1; Denmark 12, 1; France 5, 1; Great Britain 1, 5. One observation may be deduced from this view of the subject, that if it was the interest of this country to extend its navigation as far as it may be extended, by a transfer of commercial advantages from Great Britain to France, it might be increased tenfold.

Gentlemen might wish to know the proportion which American tonnage bears to that of foreign nations founded on the document of the late state of things introduced into the house yesterday; he had made a calculation on this basis and found that, with Spain our tonnage is to the Spanish as 16, 1; Portugal 17, 1; Netherlands 26, 1; Denmark 15, 1; Russia 14, 1; France between 4 and 5, 1; and Great Britain 1, 3.

This existing situation of our commerce is the more mortifying, when the nature and amount of our exports are considered. Our exports are not only necessaries of life or necessaries for manufactures, and therefore of life to the manufacturer, and thence ought to command a good market where received at all, but the bulkiness of them gives an advantage over the exports of every other country. If we chose to adopt the principle of excluding other nations from our foreign trade, in order to increase our maritime strength, the nation might secure the carriage of the whole of its exports leaving to other nations the carriage

of theirs. Such a regulation would, to be sure, be subject to a very considerable inconvenience, that of returning empty from the markets to which we exported our commodities, and therefore would operate as a considerable tax upon the intercourse, but the reasoning does not lose weight on this account, and if such a regulation was confined to Great Britain this would be the effect, that Great Britain, instead of employing in her commerce with the United States 222,000 tons and 13320 seamen, could employ only 66,000 tons and 3960 seamen, and we in our trade with her, by the same means, would raise our number of tons to 156,000 and of seamen to 9360.

He did not suggest that it ever would be necessary to carry matters to this length but it was well to shew how far we have the right and power to extend our navigation and maritime strength, which view of the matter is a sufficient guarantee against any inimical views which may be formed to our disadvantage.

[Speech to be continued.]

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

FRANCE.

NATIONAL CONVENTION.

October 6.

Letter from Lucombe Saint Michel, Representative to the People in Corsica, to the President of the Convention.

Calvi, October 1.

"Citizen President, my letter of the 16th of September, informed you of the answer which I gave to an English flag of truce, which I refused to receive. After having cut off my communication by sea with St. Florent and Bastia some English vessels gave the same summons to these two cities. I know not what was the answer of the officers who commanded there but I flatter myself that it was Republican. The English, after having examined Calvi and St. Florent, being of opinion that the latter place was more accessible than the former, was resolved to attack it. The attack was concerted with Paoli, who had come down from Corte to Murato, where, as usual, he prudently kept at a distance from the fire. For two days, two vessels cannonaded the battery of Fornelli, in the gulph of St. Florent; Leoneri, Ex-Legislator, commanded the land forces, and had along with him four field pieces, which the English had given him. The fire was brisk: we have not, as far as I am informed, lost one Frenchman; the English acknowledged that they lost 17 men, and had several wounded, among whom is a Captain of a ship, and Mafferia, a friend of Paoli, and of rank among the English. A great storm having arisen during the engagement, the English re-embarked; they left the four field pieces on the Corsicans.—During the night, the French made a sortie from Bornelli; they attacked and pursued the Corsicans, and took from them four pieces of cannon. On the same day the Corsicans attacked St. Florent, Patrimonio, Barbagio, and Furiani; they were every where repulsed with loss.

"I received the details by way of the interior and from confidential persons, whom I had sent into Nebio. Such, Citizen President, are the men who sent to the bar of the Convention a Ferrandi, a Constantini, to declaim against me and my colleagues; and to protest, that the rebellious Administration and Paoli wished to be Frenchmen. I send to the Committee of Public Safety a very curious publication. I expect, with impatience, the approach of the English, and of the faithful subjects of Pitcair, the first to Calvi. The enemy know, without doubt, that the artillery of the place is out of order; but I am there, and I am every day exercising 210 cannoners, who will do them more mischief than they are aware of. (Applauded.)

(Signed) "LACOMBE SAINT-MICHEL."

The committee of public safety presented a plan for lodging the young men in requisition at Paris. Osselin informed the Convention, that he had discovered in a concealed place, twelve hundred mattresses, twelve hundred coverlets and camp equipage for almost eight thousand men. These articles belonged to the ci-devant Count d'Artois. Osselin demanded that they should be appropriated to the use of the young men. [Applauded and decreed.]

October 17.

Bunard de Jointer wrote from Mombeliard, the 10th of October as follows:

"I make use of a bit of paper found in

the castle of the Duke of Wurtemberg, to tell you, that his principality belongs now to France. After having been informed that the little Duke had furnished his contingent to the allied armies, and that his children were in the Emperor's service, I have this morning entered Mombeliard with a battalion of Dole, 50 cavalry and some small artillery. We took the city without difficulty, nor was there a gun fired.

"I have laid hold of all the cash. Hitherto I have only found 18,000 livres, 7,000 sterling, in specie, there remains furniture in the castle to the amount of 15,000 livres, (6000 sterling) which I shall sell. I shall make haste to get the corn threshed, and send it to the army of the Rhine.

"I shall form a district, a municipality, and a club in this town, and sequester all the domains of the Prince.

"Feudal signs shall be replaced by the Cap of Liberty, and I shall try to revive the confidence of our assignats, which are very much discredited in this country.

October 18.

Thuriot proposed to sequestrate the effects of all the foreigners put in a state of arrest.—Referred to the Committee of Public Safety.

Letter from the Minister of War to the President of the Convention, dated Paris, October 17, 1793.

"Citizen President, our brave Republicans have fought with the slaves of the despots. The General in Chief is going to commence new operations."

Letter from Jourdan, General in Chief of the Army of the North, dated Head Quarters, Avesjens, October 10.

"Citizen Minister, the Republicans yesterday attacked the slaves. The right division, commanded by General Duquesnoy, has done wonders. The left division did not answer what was expected from it. The battle lasted from ten in the morning till the close of night. Our republicans conducted themselves, and fought with a courage worthy of free men.—The battle will re-commence to-morrow. I am going to set out. I hope to send you good news to-morrow.—(Applauded.)

UNITED STATES.

GEORGE-TOWN, Jan. 9.

State of the Hotel Lottery this day.

Gain of the Wheel, 73,095 Dollars.
Tickets in the Wheel, 24,100.
Tickets are therefore worth 10 Dollars 3 Cents.

Capital Prizes now in the Wheel:—
The Hotel; 1 of 25,000 Dollars; 1 of 20,000; 1 of 15,000, and 2 of 5,000.

WINCHESTER, Jan. 6.

From the Knoxville Gazette of Dec. 1.

Two Cherokee Indians, a fellow and a squaw, taken on the Tennessee, by Capt. Harrison, in a late scout, have been brought to this place; they inform, that the town on the south side of Hightower River, where a part of General Sevier's army had the late combat, is the principal place of rendezvous for the Creeks and Cherokees to assemble, previous to their coming in upon the frontiers; this town is principally inhabited by Creeks, and is governed by a Creek chief, called the Buffalo-Horn. Since General Sevier's expedition, the Indians have done but very little mischief on the frontiers of this district; they have stolen a number of horses and cattle from the out settlements, and some small trails have been seen in different places.

On Monday last Nicholas Ball (passing from Colliher's creek to Wells's station, in Knox county) was fired on by five Indians, and received three bullets through his clothes. In the action which Captain Evans had at Hightower, Mr. Ball had two bullets shot through his hat.

Copy of a letter from Col. James Winchester, to Brigadier General James Robertson, dated Sumner county, Croft's Mill, Nev. 9, 1793.

SIR,

"Some horse's having been stolen, and Indians seen in this neighborhood, I ordered our Lieut. Snoddy, with thirty men, to scout the woods about the Caney Fork, and, if possible, discover their main encampment.

"On the 4th inst. he met two, who fled, and he pursued to a large camp near the Rock Island Ford of the Caney Fork, where he took 28 good Spanish blankets, two matchcoats, eight new brass kettle- one fire-lock, three new swords, Spanish