

## CONGRESS.

House of Representatives.  
January 16.

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

Mr. S. Smith after a few introductory observations, said, the object of the resolution is to lay an extra duty on goods from powers not in treaty with the United States. Those duties will operate as a bounty, say for calculation, of 5 per cent. in favor of those powers with whom we have a treaty of commerce—for experience has shewn that those nations cannot supply us on terms so favorable as that with whom no treaty exists.

It is a subject then of fair enquiry—what advantages we enjoy from those nations (we are in treaty with) to induce us to grant them such bounty—and what are the disadvantages which result from those treaties?

The United States have a commercial treaty with France, Holland, Prussia and Sweden.

What are the commercial advantages? The advantages in the treaties most useful to us are, that free ships make free goods, and this is to be reciprocal.

We have seen that this stipulation has been violated whenever the necessity of the case (in their opinion) made it useful to France. The disadvantages of those treaties are their prizes coming into our ports, and their armed vessels cruising on our coasts.

It appears then, that we have no advantages given us by those treaties sufficient to induce us to lay a tax of 5 per cent. on 17 millions of dollars of importations, from powers not in treaty with us, say 850,000 dollars per annum to act as a bounty on the manufactures of the nations in treaty.

It then becomes a subject of enquiry, what injuries have we received from the powers with whom we have no commercial treaty, that should induce us to tax ourselves, 850,000 dollars per annum to retaliate on them.

These powers are Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Russia, Hamburg, Bremen, and the other hanse towns, and Great Britain.

Spain has laid a heavy duty on our flour to encourage her own; but not more than on that of other nations. She has also undertaken, in alliance with Great Britain, to prevent our taking our produce to France, contrary to the custom in former wars. It is true, the same two powers attempted the same thing on a former occasion. Spain has by a late edict granted to nations in treaty of commerce, license to trade to Louisiana, Florida, &c. &c. which immediately excludes us, and this may be of serious consequence.

The English will introduce a good market for tobacco there; perhaps they may think it their interest to reduce the duty on that article, now 3s. 6d. per pound, to the same with ours, which is 1s. 3d.—or if we pass these resolutions, make ours 3s. 6d. and theirs 1s. 3d.

But Spain takes almost all their flour, a great quantity of wheat, corn and lumber, beef, pork, fish, rice, &c. &c. from us, and is our very best customer.

She supplies us with dollars, brandy, wine, fruits, salt, and silk goods, on fair terms. Some of these are articles which cannot be procured from the powers in treaty, and ought we to offend her to gratify our resentment against England?

Portugal refuses since our Revolution to take our flour—in every other respect she is among our best friends—she receives our wheat, corn, lumber and many other articles—her late conduct calls for our sincerest gratitude.

She supplies us with wine, salt, some East-India goods, lemons, &c. &c.

Why should we declare commercial war against such a friend?

The immediate relations with Denmark are increasing daily, and on fair terms—in her islands we have the fairest intercourse. Our flour, meal, corn, lumber, beef, pork, and fish, are received there in our own bottoms, and we bring from thence all their produce.—Their children are educated among us, form friendships, and matrimonial connections.

Why should we declare a commercial war against a power so friendly?

Russia affords us iron, hemp, sail-duck, sheetings, and some other articles—admits us into her ports on fair terms, and leaves

to us the whole carrying trade between the two countries.—What cause have we to tax her commodities? She has done nothing to offend us—seems well disposed—and many of her articles can be had no where else; and it ought to be considered, she can support the armed neutrality.

Hamburg and Bremen receive our vessels with every possible mark of friendship—they take great quantities of tobacco, rice, deerskins, furs, and a surplus of our imports from the West Indies; they supply us with glass, German oznabrigs, and other German linens, on much better terms than any other country. What injury have those republics done us, that we should throw their trade into the lap of Holland, where we generally pay 5 to 10 per cent more than we pay in these ports.

I come now said Mr. Smith, to the great stumbling block, Great Britain, against whom these resolutions point, and whose political conduct has been the fruitful topic of so much declamation.

He concurred in opinion with those who had severely reprobated the conduct of their piratical privateers towards our navigation—but are those good reasons, said he, why we should commence a commercial war with more than one half the European nations, or even with her, unless we shall find it greatly to our interest. Alterations of commercial systems require time and much delicacy in effecting. We do not at present know what will be the result of proper remonstrances against the injuries we have suffered? Has Great Britain laid any restrictions on our commerce which are not similar to those she lays on other foreign nations? I believe not.

Have we any advantages in her ports over other foreigners? I believe we have.

Our citizens go there, commence and pursue trade, without being subject to the Alien duty paid by other foreigners.

Our tobacco pays 1/3 per lb. duty, when all other pays 3/6 per lb.

Our pot and pearl ashes are free; others pay 2/ per cwt.—which is equal to the freight.

Our naval stores pay less duty than others pay, which acting as a bounty to us enables us to send these bulky articles to such a distance.

Some of our wood is in the same situation.

The exportation of our lumber on these advantageous terms, is particularly beneficial to, and promotive of our shipping. A cargo of lumber which costs not more than 400 or 500 pounds would sell for 12 or 1400.

Mr. Smith observed that he presumed no one would tax him with being prejudiced in favor of Great Britain; he had suffered by them severely, he had fought against their usurpations, and should his duty call him, he trusted he should not hesitate to do so again. It is not what Britain may suffer by the system proposed, but the disadvantage which will be the consequence to the United States, that ought to be taken into consideration. Our duty is not to injure others, but to protect our own interest.

Mr. Smith then enquired, What have we done to benefit our own commerce?

In the first Congress, a duty of 50 cents on foreign tonnage, and 6 cents on our own, gave an advantage of 44 cents in our favour; and put us more than on a footing with the extra light money of 1/9 sterl. a ton on our vessels, charged in all their ports, except London.

We also laid a duty of 1-10th extra on goods by foreign vessels—what has been its consequence.

A gentleman from Virginia, stated that in 1660, Great Britain passed their navigation act, when the foreign trade was 1-4th of the whole, in 1770 it was lessened to 1-6th.

What is the consequence of our law? The foreign tonnage in 1770, was nearly 1-3d of the whole.

In 1792, the foreign tonnage was reduced nearly to 1-4th or as 244 to 568. This being the case, we have by our existing laws and industry decreased this proportion of the foreign tonnage 1-6th—thus has our existing laws done nearly as much in 2 years for us, as the navigation laws of Great Britain did for them in 40 years.

Under the existing state of things, Mr. Smith said, he could not see the policy of pushing regulations to accelerate a progress already without example.

The same gentleman said, that the manufactures of Great Britain amount to 51 millions, and that the proportion to Ame-

rica, is 2 millions—say 4 per cent of the exports of that country: will she give up her navigation act for the profits of 4 per cent on her exports? Can it be expected that she will deviate from a system which more than 100 years experience has confirmed the utility of.

With respect to France, Mr. Smith acknowledged in warm terms, the obligations this country was under to that, for the services rendered during the war.—France, said he, will be a republic, and as republicans, they will treat with us on fair liberal, and reciprocal terms.

Mr. Smith concluded by reading the following comparative statement:—

ENGLAND.	AMERICA.
1st. American ships pay no more duty of tonnage in her ports than her own pay, but they pay 1/9 sterling, or 39 cents extra for lights (except in the port of London) where all pay alike.	1st. British ships pay in her ports 44 cents duty of tonnage more than her own ships pay.

2d. The ships of America carry freely to Great-Britain the produce of the United States (where her own ships are permitted) & pay the same duty thereon that is paid by the ships of Great-Britain.	2d. All goods imported in British ships to the United States, pay 10 per cent. addition on the duties paid when imported in her own ships, which amount almost to the whole freight on an assorted cargo of British manufactures.
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3d. All trade in America from the British West-Indies, is prohibited, except in times (such as the present) of war, and particular scarcity.	3d. America has no Colonies, she supplies the British West-India Islands with 45,000 barrels flour per ann. Shall we risk this advantage, because they will not let us employ 12 brigs to carry it?
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4th. The trade to the British East-Indies is free for Americans, they enter and sell freely there, as well their cargoes as ships, when even British ships are prohibited.	4th. America has no East-India settlements.
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5th. American shipping can carry no foreign article to Great-Britain, nor any thing except her own produce; they cannot carry any of her manufactures, except pot and pearl ashes, pig and bar iron—which articles are free from duty.	5th. British ships are permitted to bring goods of every country to the United States; but then they are subject to an additional duty of 10 per cent. on the duty paid on goods imported in our own ships, which in almost all cases amounts to a prohibition; her copper, tin, lead, and some other gross articles, pay no duty.
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6th. Great-Britain admits from America free of duty, plank, pot and pearl ashes, bar and pig iron, when she charges a duty on the same articles from other nations, equal in some instances to a full freight, which enables America to transport such bulky articles on equal terms; she charges 1/3 per lb. on American tobacco, and 3/6 on all other.	6th. America admits nothing free of duty from Great-Britain, that is not equally free from all other countries.
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(To be Continued.)

## Foreign Intelligence.

The following intelligence is translated from Leyden Gazettes, received at Baltimore from Amsterdam.

MANHEIM, (Germany) October 22.

Since the 14th inst. the Prussian army, which by its movements contributed to the success of General Wurmler, and the Prince of Waldeck, remains in a state of tranquility, and we no longer hear the noise of cannon from the side of the Blife and Sarrie.

The head quarters of the Duke of Brunswick, on the 17th inst. were at La Verrierie de Mastall near Rishoffen. The French occupied the environs of Flammberg, and it is said sent part of their forces towards Saralbe and Bouquenon. To the latter place the members of the district of Buche have transferred their settlements.

LEYDEN, Nov. 1.

A letter from Brussels, dated the 28th ult. informs, that the French, to make a diversion in favor of the grand army commanded by General Jourdon, made a grand attack on the whole cordon, of the allied forces, from Tournay to the sea.—Early on the morning of the 22d ult. a column of French troops, from six to seven thousand strong, composed partly of the garrison of Dunkirk and of the troops which occupied the entrenched camp of Gyvelde, advanced towards Furnes, with a train of heavy cannon and mortars, with an intention to force that place: The

garrison amounting to upwards of two thousand men, composed of Austrians, Hessians, and French emigrants, marched out in order of battle to engage the enemy, and a bloody action commenced, in which both parties often had recourse to the detraactive bayonet; but, after the greatest efforts of bravery, the allied forces were forced to yield to the superior numbers of the French who entered pell-mell with them into Furnes, in the streets of which place they again fought for some time. Our troops, surrounded on all sides, succeeded in forcing their way thro' the enemy's battalions, and made their retreat to Nieuport, though continually harassed. The French, elated by this advantage, immediately marched against Nieuport, with some pieces of heavy cannon and four mortars. General Hoche, who commanded the French on this expedition, sent the following remarkable summons to the inhabitants of Nieuport—"I summon you to surrender immediately to the arms of the French Republic, before which all should yield; and I require that six hostages, the most eminent persons in your city, instantly give themselves up at my camp; otherwise, surrounded, attacked by sea and land, your city will be destroyed; I will enter on the smoking ruins of your houses and the panting wrecks of your numbers: Let the example of Furnes teach you not to depend on your defenders, who calumniate because we beat them." The magistrates of Nieuport, not terrified atrodomantade, simply answered, that it was to the military commandant he should have addressed himself, and not to them. On this refusal, the French began to throw in shells and bullets, which much damaged the city: Then the garrison determined to open the sluices and inundate the surrounding country, which they did with such success, that the enemy were obliged to retire with precipitation that they had not time to carry off two twenty-four pounders which they planted in a battery. In the mean time, on the first intelligence of this invasion which reached Ostend, four English regiments, who were ready to embark, and a part of the garrison, made a movement to succour Nieuport.

A second column of French advanced against our posts at Werwyck and Moutcorn, which they attacked with the greatest vivacity; After a most murdering engagement, our troops retreated, abandoning some pieces of dismounted cannon. The enemy entered Menin on the 23d of Oct. and the garrison retired to Wevelghem, by the contrary road, where they were attacked on the 24th, but made such a vigorous defence as obliged the French to retire.

While this passed towards West-Flanders, the French, who occupied the camp of La Magdelaine, under Lille, advanced with a large train of artillery towards Denain, Marchiennes, and Orchies, which they attacked very briskly at the same time: They were repulsed every where but at Marchiennes, which they got possession of; but the allied troops, encamped at Ciofing, having advanced on the enemy, a most bloody battle commenced, which ended in the precipitate retreat of the French, whom our troops pursued for a considerable time. We have no certain accounts of the losses sustained by both parties in three different engagements; but we know, positively, that the enemy have severely suffered, and that, on our side, we have also lost many men.

As soon as our Generals received advice of the enemy's progress in Flanders, the Duke of York, at the head of the English army, advanced by party marches to the relief of that part of our frontier.

While they fought so obstinately in Flanders, our troops in Hainault were not less active. General Jourdon having shewn by his movements that he projected an enterprise against Quesnoy, the Prince of Sax Cobourg advanced, on that side, to watch the enemy, and established his headquarters at Bermerain. On the 23d, General Ferrand left Maubeuge, at the head of six thousand men, with a design to attack the wood of Tileul, where our troops held several important posts. On this occasion a very long and obstinate battle was fought, the victory was long doubtful, but at last the French were repulsed with great loss; ours was not considerable.

Yesterday morning a courier arrived here, who brings intelligence of a great advantage being gained by General Clairfait, over a body of French troops, who were surrounded in the forest of Bouchain.