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IN SENATE OF THE U. STATES.

December 17, 1811.

[MR. GILES SPEECH CONTINUED.]

Mr. *Giles* said he had a conversation with the secretary for the department of War, in his character of Chairman of the Committee of foreign relations, in which the secretary did endeavor to demonstrate to him, that a smaller number of men than 25,000, would answer these objects; but so far from producing this conviction, it satisfied him that the number was too small. He thought that every inference drawn by the honorable Secretary, ought to have been inverted. For instance, he was asked, how many men were indispensably necessary to man the fortifications at N. York? The hon. Secretary replied, 2,000; but he intended to make 1,000 answer, and would rely for the rest of the complement on the local militia.—Now, said Mr. Giles, he inferred, if 2,000 men were necessary for that most exposed and important position, that 1,000 would not answer with the precarious and accidental aid of the local militia; that 2,000 ought to be calculated on for that service; & if with the aid of the local militia, they could protect N. York against the force Great Britain might detach against that city, they would perform their full share of the toils and perils of the war. Two thousand men, completely furnished with all the means of annoyance, possessed of all the skill that military science could afford, and impelled by all the subordination and management that military discipline could impose, with the aid of the local militia also, would deserve well of their country, if they should preserve New York from the grasp of G. Britain, in case she should think proper to direct the force she might have at command against that city. Then why send one thousand on a service, when we know that two thousand are necessary, & perhaps incompetent? Is it because the U. S. have not the capacity to send 2,000?—That question shall be examined presently. The same observations will apply to the protection of Rhode Island, where 2,000 more will be necessary; and 1000 will be as few as can possibly be detached for the other fortifications. Admitting then 5,000 men to be necessary to man the various fortifications on the sea board, and supposing every man to be raised as proposed in the bill, there will be a disposable force of only 20,000 men for the occupation of Canada. But upon the executive project, there would be left for that service only 5,000 men; unless indeed the western and southern frontiers should be left unprotected, or the fortifications on the sea board should be only half manned, and of course left to the sport of the enemy. Mr. G. said, he apprehended that in the first onset of the war, G. Britain would direct her force to the occupation of New York and Orleans; and if she should possess herself of those two points, he would venture to predict that the administration which commenced the war, would not finish it; especially under a system of policy, which would only furnish one half the means deemed necessary for their protection—yes, sir, known to be inadequate at the time of applying it. What apology could be made to an injured nation under such circumstances? We knew 2,000 men to be necessary for the defence of New York; but we sagely determined to apply 1,000 only to that object, for fear of incurring the expense of the requisite number.—This would be self condemnation. The people would lose all confidence in such calculators, and would certainly make the experiment of a change. Under such circumstances, Mr. G. said, he would be the first to cry out for a change of administration; for it would not be possible to lose by it. Defend New-York with all the judgment and skill you can command; fill the fortifications with the full complement of troops amply provided; call in the local militia, &c. and he should not be surprised if the British should get possession of that city. But then there would be no blame on the administration: all its duties will have been performed: and the result would rest upon the fortune of war; but a single act of neglect or misconduct would certainly deprive the administration of the public confidence.

If, Sir, Great Britain should get possession of New-York and Orleans, and you should get possession of Canada, you would be very glad to make the exchange upon the termination of the war. Therefore, take care of these two points.

Mr. Giles said, he also requested the hon. secretary to consult with the President, and inform him, as the President's Secretary whether the President wished to have the number of men reduced? or whether he had a preference for any other number? The reply, after the consultation, very properly, was, that the President had no opinion to offer on that point. He considered it a subject of legislative discretion, &c. Of course any informal executive views ought not to be substituted for our own discretion and responsibility. Mr. Giles said, he knew it had been suggested, and perhaps from very high authority, that nothing was necessary to induce Great Britain to recede from her aggressions, but to convince her, that instead of opposing to them inefficient commercial restrictions, they would be resisted with physical force; and that raising ten thousand men, would produce this conviction, without incurring further expence. This suggestion furnished some of his strongest objections to limiting the force to be raised, to ten thousand men. So far from producing that conviction on the British Cabinet, he was convinced it would produce precisely the opposite effect. The British cabinet would look at the means provided for effecting the object, as the best evidence of the object itself. And as these means would be viewed so utterly inadequate to the purposes of war, the cabinet would necessarily conclude, that we were not in earnest; that we were joking, even upon the most serious subject; that war was not intended, and would not be resorted to under any circumstances. This impression, the necessary result of our former measures, has become so general, both at home and abroad, that we have much to do to retrive our last reputation: we do not stand upon original ground. Our measures must be of a very different character from what they have been, to produce the desired conviction, either at home or abroad.—Having changed our principle of action from commercial restrictions, to physical force, limiting that force to ten thousand men would be in his judgment, as much trifling with the energies of the nation as inefficient, commercial restrictions had heretofore been trifling with the character and interests of the nation, and he feared was dictated by the same unfortunate imbecile spirit and policy. Mr. Giles said that whilst upon this part of the subject, he begged to be excused for reading a few paragraphs from a newspaper, which he accidentally picked up last evening, containing the announciation of the President's message at Quebec; the very point to which the proposed force might probably be directed. It fully demonstrates the impressions existing there, and which have been produced by our former measures.——*Quebec, Nov.* 18

"*President's Message*—Happily, the expectation of Mr. Madison's speech, steps in opportunely, as something of an antidote to the effect of the European dearth. From that speech shall we learn, that the terrible being, John Bull, does not suffer his thousand armed vessels, manned and equipped at an enormous expense, to lie wholly idle: but that they are guilty of the audacious tyranny of being, in some degree, a check on the violent inclinations of Dame Columbia to extend her arms to cherish, aid and assist her admired hero, Napoleon, in effecting John's annihilation. Much will the speech complain that the soverign of the ocean is not powerful to no purpose, and does not descend to, and put himself on a level with the imbecility of the United States with their dozen ships. Unpardonable is the grievance that the Leviathan is not as powerless as the Cod: that the Jackall, whom nature meant for the Lion's provider is not permitted to divert its provender to the support of the Tiger, with a view to the destruction of the Lion.

"The speech may not say these things in direct terms; but such will, unquestionably, be its meaning:

"With syllogisms 'twill make a clatter
With abstract rights, three deckers batter;
An empty purse at millions shake,
And no trade 'gainst a free trade stake;
Of rot ing produce count the gain,
A seaboard boast shut from the main;
To seamen recommend the loom,
And on each mast to fix the broom;
Merchants for lack of foreign wares,
To retail apples, plums and pears"

Limit all out mighty efforts to 10,000 men, and it will afford a better subject for another pasquinade, than the President's message had done for the one just read. He should not have ventured to read these paragraphs to the Senate, however, if these impressions were merely local. But he believed similar impressions pervaded Europe and America, and had unfortunately found their way into the French and British cabinets. Nor should he have thought these sarcasms worth regard, were it not for the truisms with which they were pointed. When the Duc de Cadore, upon his review of our proceedings, told us officially that he would have expected more from a Jamaica Assembly, he thought it both impertinent and insolent; but the point of the offence, was a consciousness that it was too much like the truth. It is the truism which forms the sting of every sarcasm. We find the Emperor Napoleon, too, acting under the same impressions, when he seizes and confiscates your property, without even a plausible pretext.—The only ground upon which he acted, was a conviction that you would not resent it, and he therefore might plunder with impunity. The same impressions direct the British cabinet in its 'inflexible hostility,' and its *war* upon our commerce, both in *character* and *effect*, 'brought home to the threshold of our Territory? If our protracted moderation, wonderful moderation, &c. by which he presumed were meant our feeble contrivances for the last three years, and of which, he feared, the requisition of 10,000 men, was a branch both in spirit and policy, should still be continued, he believed it would degenerate into something of a very different character, and would receive a very different denomination from the public.

Mr. Giles begged the Senate to turn its attention to the means of resistance now actually in Canada, which would probably be opposed to the contemplated force. From the best information he could obtain, the British had at this time in Canada from 7 to 10,000 regular troops, and from 12 to 15,000 well appointed, well furnished militia, drawn from a population of nearly 300,000 souls. If therefore your troops could be ready to act in the spring before the breaking up of the ice, and before the British could throw further succours into that country, it appeared to him there would be very good employment for 20,000 men in subduing this force and population; and if undertaken with fewer men, a failure of the enterprize would probably be the consequence. Besides, sir, we should recollect, that Great Britain is the same Great Britain we encountered in 1775, 1776, &c. and although some gentlemen seemed to suppose, that she was fully occupied with her European war: that she was impoverished, fighting for her existence, &c. &c. and of course had at command very little disposed force, he viewed the subject very differently.

It is true, G. Britain is engaged with a formidable enemy; but hitherto she has greatly the advantage in the war.—Where has she lost one inch of Territory? What acquisitions of territory and population has she not made, both in the East and West Indies? What obstacles is she now opposing to the occupation of the southern peninsula by her enemy? So far from her population being diminished at home, it appeared to be greatly increased by the last census, notwithstanding all the distresses and starvations we have heard of, &c. Count the number of French and English prisoners, and you will find that G. Britain has the advantage of perhaps ten to one. Her fleet is unrivalled—of course left more free to act than at any time during the revolutionary war. He therefore concluded that we should have to contend *now*, with the same G. Britain, we did *then* with renovated powers & resources. Yet to this power, it is proposed to oppose only 10,000 additional troops. Mr. G said, it was uncertain how long Great Britain might keep her army upon the peninsula; but whenever it shall be withdrawn, either by choice or necessity, she will have a very formidable disposable force, in numbers, skill and bravery; and whether she withdraws that army or not, you will find that she will command a respectable force for the protection of Canada, if you wait for the breaking up of the ice, which now envelopes all the avenues of that country. Time therefore is all important, and not a moment for preparations ought to be lost.

France, it is true, has astonishingly aggrandized herself during the existing war in Europe; but it has been done at the expense of other nations, not of G Britain. G. Britain has had her share of the spoils also.

Let us then not undervalue our enemy. Sir, this project of limiting our efforts to 10,000 men, seems to be too much upon the plan of a scare-crow, and it appeared to be regarded in that light by some gentleman. He said G. Britain was the last nation on earth, that he would undertake to frighten with scare

[*Continued in last page.*]

DEBATE

ON THE RESOLUTION FOR ARMING MERCHANTMEN.

MR. ARCHER. The sixth resolution of the committee of Foreign Relations being now on its passage, I must express my sorrow that I am compelled to obtrude my humble observations upon the fatigued patience of the House, and the more exhausted patience of the nation. As I shall vote against the resolution, I feel it to be my indispensable duty to detail to the House, the reasons by which my vote shall be actuated. Many honorable members may perhaps conceive that it would be more proper for me to reserve my remarks for the bill when it shall be reported; but, sir, I have ever held it to be my sacred duty, to oppose even in its incipient state every measure which may be hostile to the rights or dangerous to the interests of my country—lest by not seeming to oppose, my conduct should be construed into an encouragement of such a measure.

For what purpose, sir, let me ask, have we adopted the resolutions preceding this? Was it for the purpose of destroying the government? Was it that the members of that army should sheath their swords in the bowels of the liberties of their country?—Who will impute to this body so disgraceful a motive? Are you about to raise a standing army, not for the purpose of making preparations for war, but with a view of intimidating Great Britain to recede from her unjust infractions of our neutral right? Do not think that she will be intimidated by any preparations which you can make, however formidable they may be—she knows too well your conduct heretofore, to believe you are in earnest. She knows, that many years ago you resolved to resist, but that this honorable determination terminated in an empty resolution—she knows, too well, that you have been heretofore prodigal in words and parsimonious in spirited actions. I do not set myself up for a prophet; but, mark me, if it be not true, that Great Britain will not do you justice until you carry the war out of this hall into the heart of her colonial territories.

Under the firmest conviction, then, as I am, that war between the U States and G Britain, if we have any respect for our honor as a nation, will be an event of inevitable consequence—I have, in vain, searched for the reasons which would induce us to authorise our merchants vessels to arm against all unlawful molestations on the high seas—As the resolution is in its nature general, every man must see, on the contrary, the dangers necessarily attendant upon the adoption of such a measure. You are now on the very verge of war, you should therefore be careful not to multiply your enemies——You may, by passing this resolution, make France your enemy. You may enlist Denmark and other powers of Europe against you. This is an event which would be deeply deprecated—and that it should happen is nothing improbable. For, your merchants, armed as they will be in defence of their commerce, may select the nation who is to be your enemy. If they are molested in their commerce, whether lawful or unlawful, they will be disposed to resist. At any rate, they will be the judges of the juncture, when their interests may call for the interposition of force, and will exercise that force according to their own whims and caprices. They sail on the ocean clothed with national authority, and for their actions, whether lawful or unlawful, you will be compelled to answer. Sir, I respect the highly honorable occupation of a merchant, but not disposed to carry that respect so far, as to give my sanction to the adoption of a measure which may jeopardise the peace and endanger the interests of my country. If this resolution were to authorise an arming against G B. alone, this argument would have no effect, but as it has a view to a general arming against all nations, this reasoning is conclusive on mind—and must operate in the same way upon all men who will give the subject; a dispassionate consideration. The consequences of such a measure are plain and obvious. Now let us examine whether their exist any reason sufficiently powerful to outweigh these considerations.

What is the object, and the only one too, as stated by the honorable chairman of the of the committee of Foreign Relations (Mr. Porter) for the adoption of the measure?—Your vessels, will be armed and prepared for privateering the moment war shall be declared! Why, sir, do you think the merchants will believe that you really intend to go to war? And, if they doubt upon this subject, do you suppose they will be so regardless of their own interests as to expend their capital in fitting out privateers, when no absolute certainty exists that war is your object or your serious intention. It would certainly be an object of no inconsiderable moment, to have privateers prepared to harrass and disturb the commerce of G. B. in the event of war. If this be your object you are taking a very improper course to obtain it. If such be your object, take some decided and energetic step, which will convince even the incredulous that you will resort to the sword to obtain justice, and your end will soon be effected. But do not depress the hopes of the nation by sanctioning this tame, imbecile and temporising system.

What is the spirit that breathes in the five resolutions which have been adopted, resolutions which were in entire accordance with my feelings? Is it not a spirit of war?—Do they not bear an hostile aspect! Are they not calculated to induce G B. to believe that forbearance on our part has terminated, and that we are resolved, unless she speedily extend to us full and ample justice, to decide the contest by the sword? Have you any thing to hope, by operating upon the minds of the rulers of that nation, a conviction that you are boasting no longer? If you do entertain such a hope, I pray you do not adopt this measure, a measure which will show her the fluctuation of our opinions, and the repugnancy of our plans—a measure which will lull to sleep her fears of war, convince her not only of your indecision, but of your timidity to unsheath your sword in defence of rights clear and undisputed; &. in avenging injuries too glaring for the dignity and honor of a nation to submit to. Are the wishes of this nation to be unattended to?—Ought we not to relieve its anxieties?—Or, are we to tantalise their hopes with energy in one law, and imbecility in another? Are the merchants to be told that we will protect their commerce, by what? By granting them a right which nature has already given to them? Is commerce to be protected by abridging the natural rights of the people? Is this measure no abridgement of their rights? Does it not confine the legality of arming to resident citizens alone? Look at the measure as you please, it is a dead letter. Is this the period of all others to be selected to incorporate nonmeaning laws in the body of your statute book? Do not satirize, by such an act, the manly sensility of the people. Do not paralise the national arm. No! let us do justice to the nation by the adoption of such measures as will renovate the depressed spirits of our constituents, which will prevent them from falling into that destructive and deadly langour which this resolution is calculated to produce.

Mr Speaker permit me to address my sentiments plainly to you. The people are becoming tired of the indecision of this body. They have read many a fine and gaudy speech which has been delivered in this Hall, and let me say too, that they have seen much of bad voting. It is high time to throw of a temporising policy and to take a decided and energetic stand—no arming of merchantmen without the privilege of making reprisals, & reprisals from that power specifically that oppresses you. Had my worthy colleague, (Mr. Wright) not withdrawn his amendment, I would have given to it my sanction—I admit it would have been an act of war, and for that reason I would have voted for it; for in our present situation it is impossible to obtain enlistments without the adoption of some such measure.

Instead, sir, of this resolution, I seriously think that policy dictates to us to lay an embargo on our vessels for a limitted time.—Not an embargo of coercion on foreign powers, but an embargo for the preservation of our property which is now afloat on the surface of the ocean. It would prevent those innumerable bankruptcies which would be immediately consequent on a declaration of war in all your mercantile towns. bankruptcies which are not only injurious to the bankrupts themselves, but deadly to the resources of the nation, for the wealth of a nation should always be graduated by the wealth of its citizens. Your merchants are now sailing in every sea with the productions of your soil. We shall have to contend with the most formidable naval power in the world, and the moment war is declared, your commerce will be swept from the surface of the deep. We should gather in this capital.—We should gather in our merchants ships—We should, in truth, sir, act the provident husbandmen. Let us therefore go into our unprotected fields, cut down our harvest and remove into places of security, that our enemies and not ourselves may be the gleaners in the field.

If, sir, the resolution now under consideration should be adopted, the whole system will form a strange picture. You may touch it with the master pencil of a Reubens, it will still be a homely picture, incongruous in its parts, and in the whole ungraceful. It does appear to me to be a perfect anomoly, a measure which can be classed under neither the general head of peace or war. The Lacedemonians, it is said put to death all deformed infants. I trust this House will be endued with a Lacedemonian spirit which will crush this creature in the deformity of its birth, & that it will not be suffered to hang a dead weight on the nation.

Thus, sir, have I offered to you a few of the reasons which operate upon my mind, & which will induce me to vote against the resolution. I have done so to prevent a misconstruction of my motives, and that my reasons may go with my vote to my constituents. I should have placed my views in a clearer light upon this subject to the House, but the embarrassments inseparable from one who is unaccustomed to address deliberative assemblies, have prevented me from doing the subject that justice which it merits.

ANGLING—A Sunfish was caught in the Allegany river, a few days ago, which measured in length 15 inches, and in circumference, round the body, 14 inches. The above was put into the fishpond of Mr. George Shiras, at the point; and may be seen by the Angling Fraternity, at any time when the weather is mild.—Pitt. Gaz.